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After impeachment, House bestows big trade victory on Trump

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One day after its historic impeachment votes, the Democratic-led House gave President Donald Trump an overwhelming bipartisan victory Thursday on a renegotiated trade agreement with Canada and Mexico. By a 385-41 vote, the House approved a bill that puts in place terms of the United States-Mexico-Canada

Agreement. The legislation passed after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and her colleagues won key concessions from an administration anxious to pass the trade deal before next year's election season makes that task more difficult. The deal is projected to have only a modest impact on the economy.

Continued on Page 2



Mexico's Treasury Secretary Arturo Herrera, left, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada Chrystia Freeland, second left, Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, center, Mexico's top trade negotiator Jesus Seade, second right, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, hold the documents after signing an update to the North American Free Trade Agreement, at the national palace in Mexico City, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2019.

Associated Press

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After impeachment, House bestows big trade victory on Trump

Continued from Front

But it gives lawmakers from both parties the chance to support an agreement sought by farmers, ranchers and business owners anxious to move past the months of trade tensions that have complicated spending and hiring decisions.

The GOP-controlled Senate probably will take up the legislation when members return to Washington after the holidays and after dealing with impeachment.

"Critics said it couldn't be done, but he made it happen. Another promise made, another promise kept," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

Some said the agreement did not do enough to prevent U.S. jobs from relocating to Mexico, but it won praise from Democrats who have routinely voted against prior trade agreements.

"Twenty-six years ago, I opposed NAFTA with every bone in my body," said Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga.



Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, right, greets U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, during an event to sign an update to the North American Free Trade Agreement, at the national palace in Mexico City, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2019.

"I never thought the day would come when we would have the opportunity to right some of the wrongs in that agreement," Pelosi said the agreement was "light years" ahead of what the administration negotiated with Canada

and Mexico. "We knew we could do better," Pelosi said.

The original NAFTA phased out nearly all tariffs on goods produced and traded within North America. It was extraordinary because it linked two wealthy, devel-

oped countries with a poor, developing country. Since then, trade with Canada and Mexico has increased more rapidly than trade with most other countries. Democrats for years have charged that NAFTA led to massive losses of high-

paying manufacturing jobs in the U.S. as companies moved production to low-wage Mexico. Trump distinguished himself from free-trade Republicans in the presidential primary with his NAFTA-bashing rhetoric, and his administration got Canada and Mexico to negotiate a rewrite.

The International Trade Commission projected in April that the agreement would boost the economy by \$68 billion and add 176,000 jobs six years after taking effect.

Some of the biggest impacts would be felt in the U.S. automotive industry. The agreement aims to see more cars produced where workers earn an average of at least \$16 an hour.

The commission found that the new agreement would create 30,000 jobs in American auto parts plants. On the down side, the commission found the pact would increase the cost of pickup trucks and cars. That would hurt demand and reduce the number of jobs in factories that assemble cars by about 1,500. □

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Trump celebrates Rep. Van Drew's switch from Democrat to GOP

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced Thursday that Rep. Jeff Van Drew, a New Jersey Democrat who broke with his party to vote against Trump's impeachment, is officially switching parties and becoming a Republican.

"Jeff will be joining the Republican Party," Trump announced during an Oval Office event with Van Drew, who broke the news to his staff over the weekend, prompting widespread resignations. "It's a big deal."

Van Drew on Wednesday broke with his party and voted against impeaching Trump — a move that bolstered GOP attempts to depict Democrats as divided on the matter. Republicans voted unanimously against it.

"I believe that this is just a better fit for me," Van Drew said of his decision, promising Trump his "undying support."

"This is who I am, it's who I always was, but there was more tolerance of moderate Democrats, of Blue Dog Democrats, of conservative Democrats," said Van Drew, "and I think that's going away."

Trump, reveling in the decision, promised to return the favor and announced that he is endorsing Van Drew for reelection, calling him "a tremendous asset for the party."

Van Drew had been facing the possibility of an uphill Democratic primary, including a challenge from Brigid Harrison, a Montclair State University political science professor who is frequently quoted in local press and had secured the backing of top local Democrats, including the New Jersey senate president, Amy Kennedy, the wife of former Rhode Island Democratic Rep. Patrick Kennedy, is also considering a run.

Van Drew told reporters on the Hill after his White House meeting that he hoped the president's endorsement



President Donald Trump meets with Rep. Jeff Van Drew, D-N.J., who is planning to switch his party affiliation, in the Oval Office of the White House, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press

would be a boon, saying that, "in any primary, when you have a president supporting you, it is helpful, for sure."

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday that she had not discussed the move with Van Drew. Asked by reporters whether she had advice for him, she responded: "Nothing. Zero." The 66-year-old Van Drew had been a conservative state senator before he joined Congress, bucking Democrats on issues including gun control and gay marriage. His district has become increasingly conservative, with Trump carrying it narrowly in 2016 after Barack Obama won it in 2008 and 2012.

Van Drew met last week with Trump, who praised the congressman Tuesday on Twitter.

"Congressman Jeff Van Drew is very popular in our great and very united Republican Party," the president wrote. "It was a tribute to him that he was able to win his heavily Republican district as a Democrat. People like that are not easily replaceable!"

GOP House Leader Kevin McCarthy held the door

open this week to Van Drew becoming a Republican and on Thursday encouraged other Democrats to join him.

"I've told him many times he's more than welcome to join the Republican Party," McCarthy said. Asked if he's offered Van Drew as-

sistance in getting a committee assignment or hiring staff, McCarthy said, "I'll help him with whatever he needs." □

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GOP gives Trump unapologetic embrace over impeachment

By ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Majority Leader Mitch McConnell called on his Republican-led Senate Thursday to keep the impeached President Donald Trump in office, as the chamber edged toward a fray that spotlights the GOP's most unapologetic embrace yet of Trump.

"A political faction in the lower chamber has succumbed to partisan rage," said McConnell, R-Ky., a day after the Democratic-controlled House voted to impeach Trump, despite an extraordinary show of fealty by Republicans voting unanimously against the move. He added later: "The Senate must put this right. We must rise to the occasion." The Senate seems certain to keep Trump in office with overwhelming GOP support in a trial likely to start in January. Coupled with House Republicans' solidarity Wednesday, that underscores a remarkable turnaround from four years ago, when many GOP lawmakers wanted nothing to



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., walks to his office on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

do with the insurgent and inflammatory Trump campaign. Now, the impeachment battle spotlights how firmly Republicans are tethered to a president whose loyalty from his party's core conservative voters is matched only by his opponents' loathing for him.

Trump boasted about GOP unity during the impeachment vote. "You've never seen a Republican Party, zero negative votes. Zero," he said Thursday. "That hasn't happened almost ever because the Republicans are not necessarily known for that." Yet it's unclear what the

political impact on GOP candidates will be.

Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Fla., uttered GOP blasphemy this fall when he said he was open to considering impeachment. He announced his retirement from Congress the next day. He ended up joining his colleagues in opposing impeachment Wednesday and said that vote further aligned his party to Trump. "And that's not necessarily the Republican Party that I've been part of and been a funder for, for many years," he said. "This is a different era that we're in for Republicans, and I don't know where it's going to go."

"They are who they are," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Thursday when asked about the lack of daylight between the president and his party's rank-and-file.

She also challenged GOP lawmakers' comments during Wednesday's debate comparing Trump's impeachment to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

"Something's strange there," she said. "Apart from the fact that they want to protect the president at the cost of the Constitution."

GOP solidarity behind Trump on impeachment

contrasts with past battles over Trump priorities, such as his failed effort to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law. Republicans strongly rallied behind him, but there were small but significant numbers of defectors.

In recent weeks, Trump's team has pointed to widespread GOP support for Trump as exemplifying the president's grip on his adoptive party and a cementing of the 2016 electoral realignment that sent Trump to the White House.

"I was not a Republican. Now I'm a Republican," said Jared Kushner, who was a Democrat before helping steer his father-in-law's surprise victory three years ago. "I think the Republican Party is growing now that people like me feel comfortable being part of it."

Just three months ago, initial revelations of a phone call in which Trump tried squeezing Ukraine's new president to announce an investigation into Democrats gave pause to some Republicans.

But now, "Trump is strong as a tank with Republicans," said Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, a member of the House GOP leadership.

While stopping short of abandoning him over Ukraine, several GOP lawmakers initially took a middle-ground position, saying they wanted to learn more about what happened.

So party leaders held numerous impeachment briefings for lawmakers. Those sessions were aimed at making sure they were "getting information to people," said No. 2 House GOP leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana.

Hurd, 42 and a former CIA agent, is not seeking reelection, leaving him freer than most Republicans to abandon Trump. But Hurd said last month that while Trump's actions were "inappropriate," he believed the president had committed no impeachable offense, making it harder for wavering moderate Republicans to defect. □



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Income growth greatest in tech hubs over past 5 years

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — From the middle of the Obama administration to the midpoint of the Trump presidency, household income grew the most in tech and entertainment centers like Austin, Texas; Nashville, Tennessee; and large chunks of the West Coast. Congressional districts that attract highly educated workers around areas like Denver and Charlotte, North Carolina, were among the communities that saw mean household income rise the most from 2013 to 2018, according to new figures released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Other congressional districts that had the highest household income growth were in or around Houston; Pittsburgh; Provo, Utah; parts of South Florida and the wealthy retirement haven of Sarasota, Florida. Most of the income growth in these areas came from wages, said Mark Vitner, a senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities.

"Metro areas tied to technology have tended to perform best, although global gateways and energy markets had their moment in the sun earlier in the decade," Vitner said. Household income grew more in Democratic-leaning districts than Republican ones, according to an Associated Press analysis of the data by congressional districts. Household income grew by an average of more than \$12,000 in Democratic-leaning congressional districts, compared to more than \$9,000 in Republican-leaning districts. What impact that has going into the 2020 elections remains to be seen, experts said.

"Surely new evidence of income level rises in coastal and more highly educated districts relative to others plays to the Democrats' strength," said William Frey, a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution. "But it also makes clear they

need to redouble their efforts to court non-college voters in less prosperous districts in the run-up to the 2020 election."

The greater income growth in Democratic-leaning districts likely had to do with the fact that they're in cities where incomes tend to be higher, Vitner said.

"Republican districts tend

to be more rural and have lower wages," he said.

In some areas, the growth in household income was enormous. In House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's district, located in San Francisco, the epicenter of the last decade's tech boom, household income jumped by a third from almost \$110,500 to more than \$150,000. □




In this June 26, 2015, file photo, heavy traffic moves away from and toward the downtown area of Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

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or

Braised Pork Cheeks and Crispy Pork Belly
Slowly braised pork cheeks and crispy pork belly, served with cous-cous, baby lettuce and mango salsa

or

Salmon Ceviche
Marinated salmon, avocado, mango, red onion, bell pepper, cured in fresh squeezed lime juice served with crispy corn chips

Entrée

Triple Christmas Platter
Petit filet Mignon, glazed turkey breast and slices of smoked ham, served with apple-bacon stuffing, red cabbage, skin on mashed potatoes and rosemary gravy sauce

or


Filet Mignon and Shrimp
5 oz. of center cut filet Mignon with 4 black tiger shrimp, buttered mashed potatoes, tomato confit, seasonal steamed vegetables and burgundy red wine sauce

or

Holiday Seafood Pasta
Snapper, clams, mussels, shrimp and calamari slowly simmered in a creamy Champagne sauce, served over a bed of al dente linguini pasta and fresh shaved parmesan cheese

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Farm, ethanol groups angered at final EPA ethanol rule

By DAVID PITT

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)

— Some farm groups and farm-state lawmakers expressed anger at the Trump administration Thursday over final ethanol rules that they said failed to uphold the president's promises to the industry.

The Environmental Protection Agency released its final renewable fuel standard but it did not include language that President Donald Trump agreed to in meetings with industry officials, Iowa's governor and congressional representatives during September and October.

"Apparently President Trump doesn't care about his promise to Iowa's farmers," said Iowa Corn Growers Association President Jim Greif. "He had the opportunity to tell his EPA to stick to the deal that was made on Oct. 4."

The final agreement does not include language Trump agreed to that the EPA will add ethanol gallons back into the nation's gasoline supply based on the exemptions granted in the past three years. Instead the final rule says EPA will base oil refinery exemptions on Energy Department recommendations. The ethanol industry and corn farmers who raise the grain that's made into ethanol said the agreed upon language would have cre-



In this July 20, 2013, file photo, an ethanol plant stands next to a cornfield near Nevada, Iowa.

Associated Press

ated market certainty by assuring the industry that it would meet the 15 billion gallons (56.78 billion liters) of corn-based ethanol for 2020 mandated by federal renewable fuel standard law.

Roughly 40% of U.S. corn is used to produce ethanol so fewer ethanol gallons means a reduced market for corn.

The EPA issued 85 retroactive small refinery exemptions for the 2016-2018 compliance years, undercutting the renewable fuel volumes by a total of 4 billion gallons, (15.1 billion liters) according to the Renewable Fuels Association. Ethanol and corn industry

groups said language in the rule leaves too much at the whim of federal bureaucrats and could cause ethanol use to fall short. Ethanol industry officials said at least 20 U.S. ethanol plants have closed at least temporarily since September 2018 due in part to the reduction of ethanol use in the nation's fuel supply because of EPA policy.

"Instead of certainty, we are essentially being told to trust the EPA to uphold the RFS in the future even though for the past three years the EPA has routinely undermined the program," said Iowa Renewable Fuels Association Executive Director Monte Shaw, who

accused Trump of turning his back on farmers. "Every farmer and biofuel supporter I have talked to is deeply disappointed, frustrated, and quite frankly angry. I don't think the White House truly understands the depth of discontent in farm country."

The EPA said it has modified its refinery exemptions policy to ensure mandatory biofuels volumes are met and contends that the Trump administration has fulfilled its key promise to farmers and the industry. "President Trump committed to our nation's farmers that biofuel requirements would be expanded in 2020.

At the EPA we are delivering on that promise and ensuring a net of 15 billion gallons of conventional biofuel are blended into the nation's fuel supply," EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in a statement.

Other critics hesitated to point the finger directly at Trump but indicated deep distrust that the EPA would uphold the law.

"I'd like to say I can trust EPA will follow through with their rule, but the agency continues to side with the oil industry," said David Bruntz, a Friend, Nebraska, farmer and chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board.

He said the final rule also fails to include 500 million gallons (1.9 billion liters) of biofuels that a federal court in 2017 ordered EPA to restore back into the nation's fuel supply.

Republican Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds refrained from criticizing Trump but said: "Wheeler should know we are not done holding him to the agreement we reached with President Trump in the Oval Office on Sept. 12."

Republican Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa who was in one of the White House meetings when an agreement was struck said the final rule doesn't reflect the agreement.

"Once again, EPA is playing games and not helping President Trump with farmers," he said. □

HUD reporting 2.7% percent uptick in homeless population

By KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government is reporting a 2.7% increase in the nation's homeless population driven by a spike in California, according to an annual count that took place in January 2019. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is reporting its third consecutive uptick in its homelessness projection, based on a summary of its annual report obtained by The Associated Press.

President Donald Trump has been highly critical of the homeless problem in California, and HUD said the increase seen in its January snapshot was caused "entirely" by a 16.4% increase in California's homeless population.

"As we look across our nation, we see great progress, but we're also seeing a continued increase in street homelessness along our West Coast where the cost of housing is extremely high," HUD Secretary Ben Carson said. "In fact, homelessness in California is at a crisis level and needs to be addressed by local and state leaders with crisis-like urgency."

Every year, communities around the country organize efforts to visit

every shelter, park and alley in their communities to count the homeless population. The single night snapshot represents a key benchmark to determine how the nation is faring in the effort to end homelessness. In the January 2018 count, almost 553,000 people were counted as homeless. That number rose to about 568,000 this year.

Carson said the homeless challenge requires a community-wide response that engages every level of government, the private sector and others.

While the overall homeless count increased, there continued to be pockets of progress. The HUD count found 37,085 homeless veterans, a decline of 2.1% from 2018. The number of homeless families with children dropped nearly 5%.

The report finds that states with the lowest rates of homelessness per 10,000 people are Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Virginia and North Dakota.

The states with the highest rates were New York, Hawaii, California, Oregon and Washington.

The District of Columbia had a homelessness rate of 94 per 10,000 people, more than twice as high as New York. □

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In this Aug. 23, 2019, file photo, Paul Whelan, a former U.S. marine who was arrested for alleged spying in Moscow on Dec. 28, 2018, speaks while standing in a cage as he waits for a hearing in a court room in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

**U.S. man jailed
in Russia on spying
charges loses job****AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) —**

A Michigan man who has been imprisoned in Russia on spying charges for nearly a year has lost his job with an automotive parts supplier in a corporate restructuring, a move his brother has denounced.

Paul Whelan was arrested Dec. 28, 2018, in a Moscow hotel while visiting for a friend's wedding. The Russian government charged him with espionage and has repeatedly extended his detention while he awaits trial on charges that carry a sentence of up to 20 years. Whelan has denied the charges.

Whelan, a Marine Corps veteran, had been director of global security for BorgWarner, based in Auburn Hills, Michigan, but that role was eliminated last Friday in a corporate restructuring announced in April, BorgWarner spokeswoman Kathy Graham said.

Whelan's twin, David Whelan, told The Detroit News in an email Wednesday that his brother's health has been deteriorating and that his life has "unraveled" as he became "collateral damage in the Russian

Federation's geopolitical gamesmanship." The firing "increases the strain on our family's ability to keep some semblance of his former life ready for when he returns home," Whelan continued. Paul Whelan, 49, started with BorgWarner in January 2017 and oversaw security at facilities around the world. BorgWarner notified Whelan's representatives of his termination while he remains in Russian custody, Graham said.

Whelan spent about a decade cultivating friends and contacts in Russia, building connections on a social media platform with men who have ties to the military. Several of them said Whelan never seemed sinister, merely someone with an interest in Russia and a desire for pen pals. Whelan, of Novi, Michigan, also holds British, Irish and Canadian citizenship. He was born in Canada to British parents. Congress has demanded that the Russian government present evidence against Whelan or release him. The U.S. Embassy said requests to send a doctor to examine him have been rejected. □

**Latest Mar-a-Lago intruder
appears at first court hearing****By CURT ANDERSON
AP Legal Affairs Writer****FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.**

(AP) — The latest Chinese intruder at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida appeared in court Thursday, with a judge appointing a public defender as her lawyer and ordering that she remain in custody.

Jing Lu, 56, is charged with misdemeanor counts of loitering or prowling and resisting arrest without violence.

A judge granted \$2,000 bail but ordered Lu to be remain in custody because she is in the U.S. on an expired visa.

The judge also issued an order that Lu stay away from Mar-a-Lago, located on the wealthy Palm Beach barrier island.

Palm Beach police say Lu was confronted by the private club's security officers at the club's main entrance and told to leave, but she returned to take photos by walking down to a service gate.

According to a police affidavit, when security personnel approached, Lu fled on foot and was eventually apprehended in the tony Worth Avenue shopping district in Palm Beach. When officers approached her, Lu "balled up her hands into fists, crossed her arms on her chest, began screaming 'no, no, no' and pulling away from me," one officer wrote in the affidavit.

After that, Lu was handcuffed and taken into custody.

The affidavit says Lu refused to let investigators view the photos on her cellphone and asked immediately for a lawyer, cutting off further questioning.

Neither Trump nor his family members were at Mar-a-Lago when the incident took place.

They are expected to arrive by this weekend and spend the holidays there.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said he was not familiar with the Lu case.

"What I can tell you is that the Chinese government always requires that Chinese nationals overseas abide by local laws and regulations and not engage in any kind of illegal activities," he told reporters.

Lu's arrest follows that in March of Yujing Zhang, a 33-year-old Shanghai businesswoman, who gained access to Mar-a-Lago while carrying a laptop, phones and other electronic gear. That led to speculation she might be a spy, but she was never charged with espionage and text messages she exchanged with a trip organizer indicated she was a fan of the president and wanted to meet him or his family to discuss possible deals.

Zhang was found guilty in



This Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019, booking photo provided by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, in Fla., shows Jing Lu.

Associated Press

September of trespassing and lying to Secret Service agents and was sentenced last month to time served. She is being held for deportation.

In another Mar-a-Lago trespassing case, a University of Wisconsin student was arrested in November 2018 after he mixed in with guests being admitted to the club.

He pleaded guilty in May and received probation. □

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EU court shakes Spain with ruling on jailed Catalan official

By LORNE COOK

CIARAN GILES

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Europe's top court ruled Thursday that a former vice president of Spain's Catalonia region who is serving a prison sentence for launching a banned independence referendum has the right to parliamentary immunity. The European Court of Justice ruling was seen as a major victory for the regional politicians behind the October 2017 secession referendum, many of whom are in prison or living in self-imposed exile as fugitives from Spanish justice. The referendum in the relatively wealthy northeast region of 7.5 million people triggered Spain's most serious political crisis in decades.

In a separate ruling Thursday, a Catalan court held that the region's current president, Quim Torra, was unfit to hold office for 18 months for disobeying Spain's electoral board. The decision could lead to another regional election. The Luxembourg-based Eu-



Russian police officers secure the area near the building of the Federal Security Service in the background in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

ropean Union court found that former Catalan vice president Oriol Junqueras earned the right to immunity when he was elected to the European Parliament in May.

The ECJ said that people like Junqueras who are elected as EU lawmakers "enjoy, from the moment the results are declared,

the immunity" to travel to and take part in parliamentary sessions.

After the verdict, Junqueras, 50, tweeted: "Justice has come from Europe. Our rights and those of 2,000,000 citizens who voted for us have been violated. Annulment of the sentence and freedom for all! Persist as we have done!" Junqueras was sentenced in October to 13 years in prison for sedition. Eleven of his associates were found guilty and eight of them also received prison terms. He was in pretrial detention when he was declared to

have won the European Parliament seat. But Spain's Supreme Court refused to allow him to leave prison to take an oath to respect the Spanish Constitution, a requirement for politicians to take up their seats as EU lawmakers.

The Spanish electoral commission later declared Junqueras' seat vacant and suspended his parliamentary prerogatives. However, the European court said that while Spanish law governs electoral procedures, EU law takes over once a person is elected to the European Parlia-

ment, which represents the 28 member nations and sits in Brussels and Strasbourg, France.

It's unclear whether the ECJ ruling might secure Junqueras' release.

Spain's Supreme Court said it would study the full ruling and gave prosecutors and defense lawyers five days to present their arguments, after which a decision will be made.

The case is likely to set an important precedent for fugitive former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont, who was also elected to the EU parliament in May and has been living in exile in Belgium. Spain wants him extradited on charges of sedition and embezzlement.

Puigdemont is the subject of a Spanish arrest warrant over the independence referendum but he has also launched an appeal at the ECJ. A court in Brussels ruled earlier this week that it would await the outcome of his European case before deciding whether to extradite Puigdemont. At his residence outside Brussels on Thursday, Puigdemont and former Catalan health minister Toni Comin cheered and applauded the verdict along with other regional politicians joining them by teleconference. □

Associated Press

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Russian security officer dead, 5 injured in Moscow shooting



Russian police officers secure the area near the building of the Federal Security Service in the background in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

Associated Press

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — An unidentified gunman opened fire Thursday outside the Moscow headquarters of


Russia's top security agency, killing one officer and wounding five others, officials said.

The Federal Security Ser-

vice, or FSB, said the assailant was acting alone and didn't enter its building. Earlier, it said the assailant had been "neutralized" — a term usually used by Russian officials when an assailant is killed.

The FSB said the shooting occurred near its main headquarters on Lubyanka Square, less than one kilometer (about a half-mile) from Red Square.

Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the president had been informed of the shooting that came shortly after the Russian leader's annual news conference. □



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Iran president says country testing new advanced centrifuges

By **AMIR VAHDAT**
Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said his country's nuclear experts are testing a new type of advanced centrifuges, remarks likely meant to rally support for the Iranian leader as his nation struggles under crushing U.S. sanctions.

Rouhani spoke during a meeting Wednesday with Iranian expatriates in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he also used an Islamic conference on Thursday as a platform to decry American sanctions against Iran. "We have had great achievements and today, Iranian new IR-6 centrifuges are working and models IR-9 are currently being tested," the state-run IRNA news agency quoted Rouhani as telling the Iranian expats.

Iran was gripped by several days of violent protests in November amid anger over a sharp hike in gasoline prices following U.S. sanctions after Washington withdrew last year from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Rouhani told the Islamic conference that the U.S. sought to cripple Iran with the "heaviest sanctions" but the country's economy is on the mend and moving away from reliance on oil. His announcement a day earlier about the new centrifuges being tested was not the first time they were mentioned. Last month, Iran's nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salemi first mentioned that Iranian scientists have

built a prototype of an IR-9 centrifuge that is 50 times faster than the IR-1 ones, which Iran mostly uses.

Also in November, Iran began injecting uranium gas into over a thousand centrifuges at a fortified nuclear facility at Fordo, built inside a mountain as the latest step away from its atomic accord with world powers since President Donald Trump pulled America out of the deal.

The centrifuges at Fordo are first-generation IR-1s but the 2015 landmark nuclear deal allowed those at Fordo to spin without uranium gas, as well as allowing over 5,000 such centrifuges to operate at the Iranian Natanz facility to enrich uranium.

In the meantime, Tehran has also doubled the number of advanced IR-6 centrifuges operating in the country to 60, another step away from the nuclear accord.

A centrifuge enriches uranium by rapidly spinning uranium hexafluoride gas. An IR-6 centrifuge can produce enriched uranium 10 times faster than an IR-1, Iranian officials say.

For now, Iran is enriching uranium up to 4.5%, in violation of the accord's limit of 3.67%. Enriching uranium at the 3.67% level is enough for peaceful purposes but is far below weapons-grade levels of 90%.

The nuclear deal was struck amid Western fears that Iran could use its program to build a nuclear weapon. Tehran insists the program is for peaceful purposes. □



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani delivers a speech at the Kuala Lumpur Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

Associated Press



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German parliament calls for full ban of Hezbollah activities

By DAVID RISING

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's parliament passed a resolution Thursday calling for a national ban on the activities of Hezbollah and for the Lebanese militant group to be put on the European Union's terrorist list. Mathias Middelberg, the spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives in parliament, said the joint resolution was agreed upon with the junior coalition Social Democrats, as well as the opposition Free Democrats.

"It is unacceptable that Hezbollah is waging a terrorist fight against Israel in the Middle East, which is being financed through worldwide criminal activities, among other things," he said in a statement. "In view of Germany's special responsibility toward Israel, we call on the government to ban all activities for Hezbollah in Germany."

The EU now lists Iran-backed Hezbollah's military wing as a banned terrorist group, but not its political wing, which has been part



Picture taken on July 2, 2019 shows people taking part in a demonstration under the alliance "No Al Quds march 2016! Together against all anti-Semitism!" at Kurfuerstendamm in Berlin, Germany. Banner left reads "ban Hezbollah".

of Lebanese governments in recent years.

"The separation between a political and a military arm should be abandoned, and Hezbollah as a whole should be placed on the EU terrorist list," Middelberg said. "This could freeze Hezbollah's funds and assets

in Europe more extensively than before."

However, other member nations have opposed broadening the scope of the EU's Hezbollah ban. Israel welcomed the decision by German parliament, known as the Bundestag, and said it hoped the

move would encourage other European countries to take similar steps.

"The Bundestag's resolution is an important step in the international struggle against terrorism, particularly against terrorist organization Hezbollah and its patron Iran," said Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz. The parliamentary resolu-

tion in Germany was approved with a majority show of hands by members of Merkel's bloc, the Social Democrats and the Free Democrats. Other parties represented in the German legislature all abstained.

The Left Party said it could not vote for the resolution because adding Hezbollah to the EU terrorist list could complicate relations with Lebanon.

Members of the Greens said they agreed with almost all of the resolution but objected to a point that they said could lead to "military intervention" in the Mideast.

Johann Wadephul, a lawmaker with Merkel's Christian Democrats, offered assurance that the resolution's call for measures to reduce the influence of Hezbollah in the region, particularly in Syria, did not foresee military action.

"But we are all called upon to isolate Hezbollah internationally," Wadephul told fellow lawmakers. "They threaten Israel, they threaten the peace process in the Mideast and therefore we must confront Hezbollah." □

Associated Press

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Warring sides reach humanitarian agreement on key Yemen town

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Yemen's warring parties agreed Thursday to create humanitarian corridors in the key port city of Hodeida, which remains the main entry point for food and aid in a country witnessing the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The agreement follows two days of U.N.-mediated talks between the Houthi rebels and the Saudi-led coalition. A coordinating committee sanctioned by the world body said in a statement that both parties were working on redeploying forces to improve humanitarian access and enable movement of civilians.

The port handles 70% of Yemen's food imports and aid. The two sides signed a

U.N.-brokered agreement last December in Sweden that included a cease-fire for Hodeida and an exchange of more than 15,000 prisoners. But the deal was never fully implemented. This week's talks focused how both sides would redeploy forces from strategic areas in Hodeida, which has seen some of the war's worst fighting. The talks also addressed who will oversee administration of the country's most important shipping port. They come amid a renewed push for peace. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 and has since waged war against the Houthis in an effort to restore the government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to power. □

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Your online Aruba restaurant guide

Australia's most populous state declares wildfire emergency

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE

Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) —

Australia's most populous state of New South Wales declared a seven-day state of emergency Thursday as oppressive conditions fanned around 100 wildfires.

Around 2,000 firefighters were battling the blazes, half of which remain uncontrolled, with the support of U.S. and Canadian backup teams and personnel from the Australian Defence Force.

The last state of emergency ran for seven days in mid-November amid "catastrophic" fire risk and was the first implemented in New South Wales since 2013. Central Sydney reached a maximum of 39 degrees Celsius (102 Fahrenheit) on Thursday, while outer suburbs scorched at 42 Celsius (108 F).

A statewide total fire ban



A fire truck is seen during a bushfire near Bilpin, 90 kilometers (56 miles) northwest of Sydney, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

Associated Press

announced on Tuesday will remain in place until midnight on Saturday.

Around 3 million hectares (7.4 million acres) of land

has burnt nationwide during a torrid past few months, with six people killed and more than 800 homes destroyed.

The annual Australian fire season, which peaks during the Southern Hemisphere summer, started early after an unusually warm and dry

winter. New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said authorities were concerned with the unpredictable conditions.

"With extreme wind conditions, extreme hot temperatures, we have a good idea, a good sense, of where the most concerning areas are, but again when you've got those turbulent conditions, embers and spot fires can occur very unpredictably," she told reporters.

Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said five 100-member "strike teams" were on standby to deploy to the most dangerous fires.

Sydney's air pollution levels on Thursday ranged from poor to hazardous.

During the past month, hazardous smoke has often blanketed Australia's most populous city and made its iconic skyline barely visible. □

6 activists stand trial in Indonesia on charges of treason

By TATAN SYUFLANA

NINIEK KARMINI

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) —

Five Papuan pro-independence students and a rights activist went on trial Thursday on charges of treason after waving morning star flags that are a separatist symbol during a peaceful protest in front of Indonesia's presidential palace.

The rally in the capital, Jakarta, in August was part of weeks of protests triggered by videos that circulated widely on the



Papuan independence activists, from left to right, Anes Tabuni, Ambrosius Mulait, Suryanta Ginting, Arina Elopere, Isay Wenda, and Charles Kossay attend their trial at Central Jakarta District Court in Jakarta, Indonesia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019.

Associated Press

internet showing police, backed by soldiers, calling Papuan students "monkeys" and "dogs."

Protests in several cities in Papua and West Papua provinces turned violent, leaving more than 30 people dead and hundreds of buildings and vehicles burned.

Paulus Suryanta Ginting, an Indonesian rights activist and the spokesman for the Indonesian People's Front for West Papua, was arrested three days after participating in a rally by about 100 West Papuan

students in Jakarta on Aug. 28 to protest racism and call for independence for the restive region.

Dano Anes Tabuni and Arina Elopere, the only woman, were arrested two days after the protest. Prosecutors charged them with treason, which carries a possible penalty of life imprisonment. The six defendants denied any wrongdoing. Two wore traditional Papuan clothing and headgear during Thursday's trial. They painted the word "monkey" on their bodies. □

In a first, Peruvian with Down syndrome runs for parliament

By **FRANKLIN BRICEÑO**

Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Bryan Russell has Down syndrome and does daily speech exercises, putting pens and corks in his mouth to help build up low muscle tone there. He is also waging a longshot bid to become a national Peruvian lawmaker, going door to door in Lima to ask for votes.

Russell, 27, wants to use his campaign to raise awareness about people with developmental disabilities and he says he represents an alternative to the scourge of corruption in Peru that has brought down presidents and weakened democratic institutions.

"I'm someone clean, honest, transparent," Russell said in an interview with The Associated Press. He spoke while sitting next to Amor, a pet dog he rescued from the street. The purpose of politicking, he said, is to "break the paradigm" that people with Down syndrome can't be independent. Russell may be the first person with Down syndrome to run for public office anywhere, according to the Global Down Syndrome Foundation. "We are thrilled that Bryan Russell is running for Con-



In this Dec. 13, 2019 photo, Bryan Russell takes a call as he campaigns for Congress in Lima, Peru. **Associated Press**

gress in Peru," said Michelle Sie Whitten, president and CEO of the foundation. "As far as we know, he is the first professional who has Down syndrome running for a publicly elected office, and he is showing the world that we need diversity in all areas of society including in our governments."

In 2013, Ángela Bachiller, who has Down syndrome, became a city councilor in Valladolid, Spain. But she didn't run for election, in-

stead taking over the post after her predecessor resigned because of corruption allegations.

Down syndrome is a genetic abnormality that causes developmental delays and medical conditions such as heart defects and respiratory and hearing problems. Russell is a candidate for Peru-Nacion, a center-right party that is not widely known and has fared poorly in past elections. However, Russell's bold cam-

paign ahead of the Jan. 26 parliamentary elections is getting attention. He was invited to speak at a leftist forum where he asked people to fight for people like him, regardless of political leanings.

"I want people with my condition to have a voice," said Russell, who studied communications at the Peruvian San Ignacio de Loyola University and said his parents encouraged him to find his own way.

"I learned how to read and write, walk, run and eat, basically to respect myself," the candidate has written.

"Well this is really impressive, because Bryan is changing the history and that is the most important thing," said Gladys Mujica, Russell's mother. Mujica, an English teacher, described her son as a "symbol."

Some Peruvians are open to Russell's campaigning, which consists on a normal day of handing out leaflets while carrying a sign with an image of his face.

"He's looking to do his best. The 'normal' people try to steal from the country. That's a very big difference," said Carlos Maza, a retired man who said he would vote for Russell.

"We have to give him a chance," said Elena Saavedra, a secretary who shook the candidate's hand.

About 3 million Peruvians have some kind of disability in a country of more than 30 million, according to official figures. There is no data for the number of Peruvians with Down syndrome, though historian Liliana Peñaherrera, founder of the Peruvian Society for Down Syndrome, estimates there could be up to 25,000 people with the condition. □

UN Mexico rights office criticizes government on Mayan Train

By **PETER ORSI**

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexico office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a string of criticisms Thursday of the government's handling of consultations with indigenous communities over a planned megaproject known as the Mayan Train in the country's southeast.

The agency, which said its observers attended a number of regional assemblies in late November and December, applauded Mexico for its stated intent of respecting and protecting indigenous rights and for the fact that the consultations took place before the project's execution.

But days after a referendum on the multibillion-



In this March 18, 2019 file photo, Rogelio Jiménez Pons, director of Fonatur, points to a map of a planned train line through the Yucatan Peninsula, during an interview in Mexico City. **Associated Press**

dollar project that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said gave overwhelming support to the proposal, the U.N. office found that the consultations were flawed and the process "has not complied with all international stan-

dards on human rights."

The office said that during the assemblies, observers noted that only possible benefits of the project were mentioned and not "negative impacts" that could be caused. On multiple occasions, it said, participants

asked about those potential impacts and did not receive a clear or complete answer.

"The lack of studies on the impacts or their lack of diffusion makes it hard for people to define their position on the project in a fully informed manner," the office said in a statement. "Nonetheless, authorities advanced to the consultation stage of the process."

A spokesperson for López Obrador's administration did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment on the U.N. findings. The president has touted the Mayan Train, one of his core promises from the 2018 presidential campaign, as a major effort to lift up some of the country's most impover-

ished communities.

The train would travel some 950 miles (1,525 kilometers) around the Yucatan Peninsula and down into the southernmost state of Chiapas, from cities and beach resorts to pristine jungle and ancient Mayan ruins. There are environmental and development concerns surrounding the project, however.

The U.N. office also highlighted other problems with the consultations such as community members expressing support for the train in hopes that would win them benefits such as jobs, homes or education, despite officials' reassurances to them that economic, social and cultural rights were not conditioned on such support. □

LOCAL



Full laughter at Aruba Ray Ellin's phenomenal show Top American standup comics give fantastic performance

EAGLE BEACH — The “Aruba Ray’s Comedy” show features some of the funniest American standup comedians in a terrific 90-minute show, and Aruba Today was there and had a blast at the Casa del Mar Beach Resort & Timeshare. It all begins and ends with host Ray Ellin. You will be amazed with his quick wit, sharp tongue and hilarious observations of the public, memorizing every targeted person in the audience throughout the whole show. Three top comedians took care of a full laughter show where you forget all your worries and walk out with a happy smile.

Celebrating six years of Excellence in Aruba, Aruba Ray’s Comedy is the number one rated Night Time Activity on TripAdvisor, the number one rated Show on TripAdvisor, and the number one rated Fun Activity on TripAdvisor. The show was named as one of USA Today’s “10 Best”. This is the same caliber show you would find at the top comedy clubs in NYC. The line-up is truly some of the best and hottest comedians from the United States. This wonderful show is the best way to spend a night out “off-the-town”; so to speak.

Line-up was Dan Naturman, finalist on America’s Got Talent, Tony V from CBS’ “The Late Show”, Christine Hurley from “Last Comic Standing” and

all three were simply the greatest in their own identical style. The room is cozy where you are seated close to the stage resembling a New York club and being able to see the mimics of the comedian, in the case of Hurley a must because she makes the funniest faces. The dry humor of Naturman, the rude jokes of Hurley and the ‘let’s have a chat’ way of Tony V all rocked. Ellin is a great host, welcoming the audience personally at the entrance and waving them out after the show. We felt truly relaxed and happy after two hours of gut-busting laughter and forgetting everything else.

Ray Ellin is considered by his peers to be the best host in NYC, Ray is also known as “Aruba Ray” because of his passion for Aruba. Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past seven years, where he produces and hosts these incredible comedy shows. Already popular in New York, the comedian has brought his talent and some of his colleagues to Aruba.

Catch the final show tonight at 8:30pm in the show-room at the Casa Del Mar Resort. Doors open at 8pm. The show will be back in January at the Holiday Inn resort so check out Aruba Today newspaper to keep track of the new schedule. You may also find updates at www.ArubaComedy.com. □




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5 o'clock Somewhere Bar & Grill is the new thrill in town! "Everyone knows Jimmy Buffet's bars in the States"



ORANJESTAD — The Renaissance Marketplace recently opened their other-state-of-mind 5 o'clock Somewhere Bar & Grill as well as Winter Wonderland. Start your weekend off with a great energy because this will definitely make you happy. Time will be irrelevant while taking in the chill vibes of live music and lots of fun, super drinks and scrumptious delights. You simply can't miss it!

The dynamic manager of 5 o'clock Somewhere Bar & Grill, Carlton Ho Sing Loy, can't wait to show the guests why the bar has already earned its stripes in the States. "Everyone knows Jimmy Buffet's bars in the States. He is a singer and producer who owns the Margaritaville chain named after his hit song 'Margaritaville'. You will find this bar in many places, but Aruba has the first stand-alone 5 o'clock Somewhere bar. "Here it is all about fun and entertainment. Big fans of Buffet are called Parrot Heads and for sure we will



put them here at the bar. We will play games with our guests like Corn Hole, Plinko and Ring Games to interact and of course prices are to be won. Regular guests are familiar with the typical Buffet greeting which is the Fins Up. Yes, this is a happy experimental bar." A great choice to do something different for locals, and a must-do for Buffet fans.

Margaritaville classics? Try the 5 o'clock signature burger or the nachos with tortilla chips that are layered with beef and bean chili, cheese, pico de gallo, jalapeños, guacamole and sour cream. It is a straight, yes. But after all you are in Aruba so you may feel to taste a bit of the island. Another yes as there is the Aruban Cuban, bitterballen or Chicken Keshi Yena. It is up to you! "By the way, we also got the merchandising kiosk selling T-Shirts, caps and so on."

Everything at Somewhere

Ho Sing Loy's team is ready to welcome you at their dynamic place where you can expect bottle flipping and other tricks, TV screens showing sports and daily specials like Margarita Mondays, Tito Tuesdays, Wing It Wednesdays. "It is a very different menu in the sense that we have all the original drinks that belong to the Margaritaville brand like the Margarita's Who's To Blame, Uptown Top Shelf, Livin' it up and so on. Beers, wines, boat drinks, smoothies are all part of the offering, for everyone there's something at the 5 o'clock Somewhere Bar. The menu drinks and bites are well-priced inclusive taxes and service charge. Are you craving for some

Zugheila Lindeborg, Local Marketing Manager: "We planned building a bar for many years already and we found the right match with the brand Margaritaville. It is a different type of bar because of the chill environment combined with lots of fun." Ho Sing Loy agrees to that: "At this bar, you can just be you. It is an easy walk-in bar for everyone. The bar is large and inviting with a DJ every night and every Friday a live band on a small stage. The ambiance will rock and the fun never stops." Raise a glass and take a bite out of paradise! ☐



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Families with love for Aruba

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Jonathan Boekhoudt of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Distinguished Visitors, Goodwill Ambassadors, and Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Distinguished visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more

consecutively. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were Matthew Woll, Dana & Michael Bernier, and Thomas Pennington & Stephanie Wade as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The goodwill Ambassador certificate went to Melissa Magee, Wilf & Maureen Townley, and Frederico & Anita Garza. The Emerald Ambassador certificate went to Frederick Woll. The



Emerald Ambassador certificate is the highest certificate that we present, and is given to visitors who have been visiting Aruba 35 years or more consecutively. It is incredibly beautiful to see that Aruba has so many loyal visitors, and we hope to see them for many more years to come.

These wonderful people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety and Aruba's

warm and friendly people who became like family to them. These honorees not only fell in-love with the island, but also brought family, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors to Aruba.

Boekhoudt together with the representatives of the Tamarijn All-Inclusive Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

Groceries to Go

ORANJESTAD — Fitness Guru Marilyn Pick reinvents herself as a Grocery Entrepreneur for Aruba's Tourists. Marilyn Pick says she and her family find it tremendously "exciting and rewarding to create something that people enjoy and appreciate." Around the Baltimore metropolitan area, Marilyn Pick has built a reputation for fitness and fashion. But on the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba, she's best known for groceries.

Perpetually clad in red and black, Pick has taught countless cardio, step, strength training, body sculpting and Zumba classes, and was voted "Best of Baltimore" by Baltimore magazine. As an instructor and former business owner/group fitness director, she served on the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, offered exercise tips on TV and led warm-ups at numerous charity races.

That boundless energy recently propelled her into a new business venture. In addition to teaching total body workouts, Pick serves as marketing director of GroceriesToGo Aruba, the island's first full-service online grocery delivery business.

She co-founded the enterprise with her son, Jared, and husband, Karl, who grew up in Aruba and maintains dual citizenship. During a New Year's Eve dinner on the island four years ago, the Picks conceived the idea of forming an online grocery delivery business to help Arubans and vacationers alike.

Karl Pick, an orthodontist and University of Maryland School of Dentistry professor, oversaw the process of applying for the required business licenses. Jared Pick, a University of Michigan graduate with an MBA, did extensive research and planning before developing a customized website, converting prices from Dutch florins to dollars to make it easy for American vacationers.

When the business was operational a year later, they teamed up with Aruba's largest supermarket, Ling and Sons IGA Super Center in Oranjestad, to become their exclusive delivery partner. GroceriesToGo Aruba's stated mission is "to provide quality products and convenient services to customers that will allow them more time to enjoy their vacation and the wonders of Aruba, One



Happy Island!"

Comprising thousands of grocery items and travel essentials, GroceryToGo's merchandise includes fresh produce, meat, desserts, dairy, frozen foods, snacks, deli, gluten free and kosher products; beverages including beer, wine and spirits; health and beauty; baby care; household goods, rental furniture and more.

Jared Pick is the company's CEO, running daily operations, while Karl Pick is the CFO. The business runs smoothly with Edgar Sawney as manager working to make sure the orders are filled correctly and delivered on time.

Marilyn Pick says marketing was a major part of building her fitness business, so it's a natural transition for her to promote GroceriesToGo Aruba since she be-

lieves it is a beneficial service for so many people. Vacationers can arrive on the island and relax at the beach while GroceriesToGoAruba shops for all their groceries and delivers everything right to where they are staying.

"I like to visit timeshares and hotels, educating the concierges on how we can assist their guests by our shopping for their groceries so they don't have to take time away from their vacation to shop and stand in line in a grocery store. GroceriesToGo Aruba now delivers to every hotel on the island of more than 104,000 inhabitants, as well as to timeshares, Airbnbs, villas, beach houses, homes, businesses, boats and yachts. Islanders who are too busy to shop applaud the service, as do vacationers who like arriving at their destination with grocer-

ies waiting for them. "We brought four generations to Aruba and didn't have to leave the family to go grocery shopping," says Jennifer Goldmeier, vacationing in Aruba. "It is a great service, and we wouldn't do it any other way!"

Dr. Joanne Rief concurs. "GroceriesToGo Aruba makes it so easy to have our groceries delivered right to us when we arrive," she says. "I can't wait to use this service again on my next trip to Aruba."

Pick says she finds it tremendously "exciting and rewarding to create something that people enjoy and appreciate." She also loves being part of a family business. "We work well together, share ideas and collaborate in the decision-making." For information, visit www.GroceriesToGoAruba.com. □

Aruba to Me

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today likes to welcome readers to participate in our newspaper. You can see that in our Honored Guest-publications, specials like on Valentine's Day and on other occasions. Throughout the year you are always welcome to send us your vacation picture(s) together with completing the sentence: Aruba to me is (Email: news@arubatoday.com)

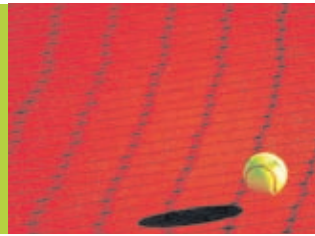
For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Melisa Morgan** from New York with her cousin **James** from Washington, DC. She wrote to us:

"I recently celebrated owning and visiting Aruba for 20 consecutive years! I was honored and received my Goodwill Am-

bassador Award from The Aruba Tourism Board. I thank them so much. It was beautiful. I am a member and own at Paradise Beach Villas. Owning there is very special because they always treat you like family and that is your home. I come to Aruba every year to celebrate my birthday with my cousin James W. Jones who also owns at La Cabana. James first invited me and introduced Aruba to me in 1999. It is fun for us to meet up in Aruba and enjoy the beach, the food and all festivities that the island has to offer. We have visited The Flying Fishbone restaurant many times to eat right on the water with sand at your feet. The food is always excellent and the service is great. This is one of the "Aruba To Me" moments!" □



SPORTS



Watch every bowl? Yes! Here's why they are all must-see TV

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**

AP College Football Writer
This bowl season starts a bit earlier and ends a bit later. The number of games is the same, but they are spread over more days.

That means more days with at least a little bit of college football, ending with the national championship game Jan. 13 in New Orleans. We will save the playoff picks for another time. Do you really need a reason to watch the games that determine the national championship? For the other 38 games, you might need a little convincing. We're here to help.

The picks and a reason to watch every bowl game (all times EST):

Friday, Dec. 20

Bahamas Bowl

Nassau

Buffalo vs. Charlotte, 2 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: Buffalo minus 6.5

Why watch? Three words:

Early happy hour.

Pick: CHARLOTTE 24-21.

Frisco (Texas) Bowl

Utah State vs. Kent State, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

Line: Utah State minus 7.

Why watch? Impress your friends when you inform them Kent State coach Sean Lewis is both the youngest (33) and tallest (6-foot-7) coach in FBS.

Pick: UTAH STATE 35-24.

Saturday, Dec. 21

Celebration Bowl

Atlanta

North Carolina A&T vs. Alcorn State, noon (ABC)

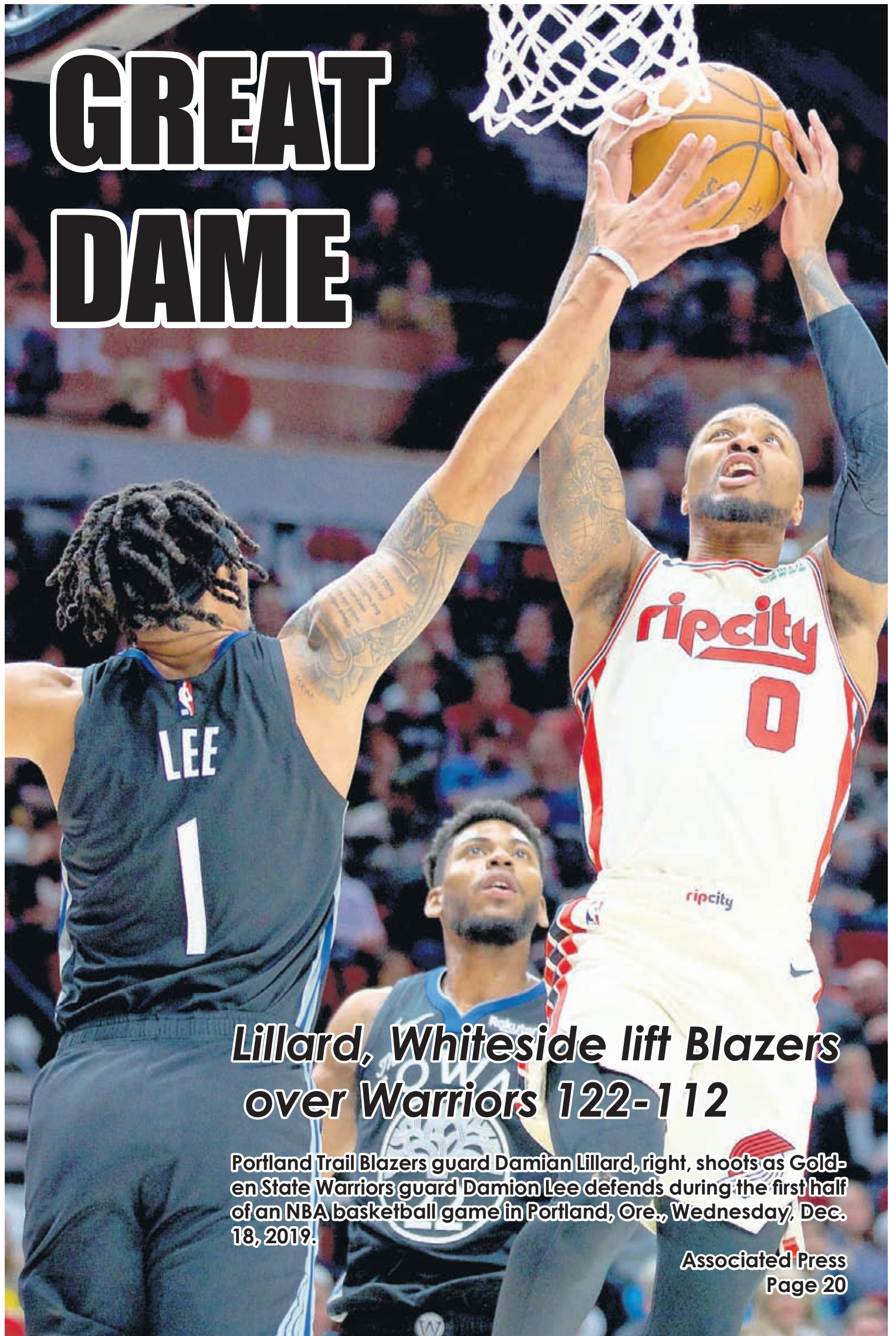
Line: NC A&T minus 3.

Why watch? FCS football, but major college bands at halftime.

Pick: NC A&T 24-21.

Continued on Page 23

GREAT DAME



Lillard, Whiteside lift Blazers over Warriors 122-112

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, right, shoots as Golden State Warriors guard Damion Lee defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019.

Associated Press
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APNewsBreak: Red Sox, Yanks, Cubs sent 2019 luxury tax bills

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Boston will pay a Red Sox record \$13.4 million luxury tax after failing to make the playoffs and the New York Yankees finished with a \$6.7 million bill, likely a fraction of what they will pay next year. Three teams owe tax, according to end-of-year figures sent to clubs Wednesday and obtained by The Associated Press. The Chicago Cubs must pay \$7.6 million following a season that ended with a September fade and no postseason berth.

New York has run up a total of \$348 million in tax since the payroll restraint system began in 2003, owing money in each year except 2018. The Los Angeles Dodgers are second at \$150 million, followed by the Red Sox at \$50 million and the Cubs at \$11 million. This year's initial tax threshold was \$206 million, counting payrolls by average annual values and including earned bonuses, adjustments for cash transactions, option buyouts and just over \$14 million per team in benefits.

Among regular payrolls, which include salaries, prorated shares of signing bonuses and earned bonuses, the Red Sox topped the major leagues for the second straight season at \$228 million. The Yankees were next at \$226 million, followed by the Cubs (\$220 million), World Series cham-



Gerrit Cole poses at Yankee Stadium as the newest New York Yankees player is introduced during a baseball media availability, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019 in New York. The pitcher agreed to a 9-year \$324 million contract.

Associated Press

pion Washington (\$205 million) and the Los Angeles Dodgers (\$205 million). Five of the top 10 spenders missed the playoffs, with the Red Sox and Cubs joined by San Francisco (\$183 million), the Los Angeles Angels (\$166 million) and Philadelphia (\$161 million).

Just two teams from the dozen lowest payrolls reached the postseason. Tampa Bay (last at \$67 million) defeated Oakland (26th at \$96 million) in the AL wild-card game, then lost to Houston in a five-game Division Series.

Overall spending on regular payrolls dropped for the third straight year, an aberration caused by large signing bonuses for Mike Trout, Alex Bregman, Jacob deGrom, Paul Goldschmidt, Clayton Kershaw,

Manny Machado and A.J. Pollock. Those bonuses are prorated over the length of each contract, and payrolls totaled \$4.219 billion, down from \$4.227 billion in 2018 and \$4.245 billion in 2017.

But teams set a record at \$4.7 billion in the computation by average annual values, an increase of \$157 million that follows the longer-term trend. That came after an offseason when the clubs committed \$3.88 billion in guaranteed money, their biggest spending spree ever. Atlanta, Cincinnati, Colorado, Houston, Milwaukee, Oakland, San Diego and St. Louis had their highest AAV payrolls. Among regular payrolls, which better display year-to-year shifts, Detroit dropped from \$191 million in 2017 to \$133 million

in 2018 to \$117 million this year. Baltimore cut from \$167 million in 2017 to \$137 million in 2018 to \$83 million this year.

Toronto fell from \$165 million in 2017 to \$157 million in 2018 to \$120 million this year, and Kansas City from \$154 million in 2017 to \$127 million in 2018 to \$102 million this season. Under new CEO Derek Jeter, Miami shaved from \$117 million in 2017 to \$90 million in 2018 to \$76 million this year.

Big one-season drops this year included San Francisco (\$27 million), and Arizona, Cleveland and Seattle (\$23 million each).

Large rises were headed by Philadelphia, up \$54 million to \$161 million, and the Yankees, who rose by \$43 million. New York dropped to sixth in 2018, rose to second this year and figures

to lead the major leagues next year after reaching a record \$324 million, nine-year contract with pitcher Gerrit Cole.

Other teams with significant hikes included Cincinnati (\$34 million), the Chicago White Sox (\$26 million), Milwaukee (\$25 million), the Chicago Cubs (\$22 million) and World Series champion Washington (\$21 million).

Showing a wide disparity, the top 50 players averaged \$24.1 million while the listed major league salary of the roughly other 1,500 players who spent at least one day on a big league roster this year averaged \$2.4 million.

Next year's tax starts at \$208 million, and New York's rate will rise from 20% to 30% on the first \$20 million over, 32% to 42% on the next \$20 million and 62.5% to 75% on any amount above \$248 million. If the Yankees exceed \$248 million, which now appears likely, their top selection in the June 2021 amateur draft would be dropped 10 places.

Checks for the competitive balance tax, as it is normally known, go to the commissioner's office and are due by Jan. 21. The first \$13 million of tax money is used to fund player benefits and 50% of the remainder will be used to fund player Individual Retirement Accounts. The other 50% of the remainder will be given to teams not over the tax threshold — \$272,979 per club. □



In this Aug. 30, 2017, file photo, New York Yankees' Jacoby Ellsbury reacts after grounding out to end the sixth inning in the first game of the baseball team's doubleheader against the Cleveland Indians at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Associated Press

APNewsBreak: Union files grievance on behalf of Ellsbury

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Major League Baseball Players Association has filed a grievance against the New York Yankees in an attempt to regain the remaining \$26 million due released outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury.

The grievance was disclosed to The Associated Press by a person familiar with the process who spoke on condition of anonymity because no announce-

ment was made. Barring a settlement, the grievance will be heard by arbitrator Mark Irving.

New York converted Ellsbury's \$153 million, seven-year contract to non-guaranteed, contending he violated the deal by getting unauthorized medical treatment, then released the 36-year-old outfielder on Nov. 20. The Yankees said he was treated by Dr. Viktor Bouquette of Progressive Medical Center in

Atlanta without the team's permission.

Ellsbury contends any treatment he received without authorization was for a non-baseball-related injury or condition, which does not require the club's consent.

Ellsbury has not played since 2017 because of a variety of ailments. He is owed more than \$21.1 million for 2020 plus a \$5 million buyout of a \$21 million team option for 2021. □

Jaguars adjust clocks with Coughlin gone, stump for Marrone

By **MARK LONG**
AP Sports Writer

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) —

About 12 hours after Jaguars owner Shad Khan fired top executive Tom Coughlin, all the clocks inside the building were reset. There was no more "Coughlin Time" in Jacksonville.

It could be the franchise's most significant change. There's growing belief that Khan plans to keep coach Doug Marrone and general manager Dave Caldwell in 2020. Marrone and Caldwell have two years remaining on their contracts, and Khan apparently wants to see what they do can without one of the NFL's most stringent taskmasters trying to control everything from draft picks to sock choices.

"We'd love to see coach Marrone stick around and see this through," Pro Bowl defensive end Calais Campbell. "Change can be good. Too much change can work against you."

"It threw me off when I first got here," defensive tackle Abry Jones said. "I thought I was late. That's probably the strongest adjustment we're going to have to get to, just resetting 5 minutes back."

Khan said he decided weeks ago to fire Coughlin, who botched several draft picks, failed repeatedly to fix the team's quarterback situation and upset star cornerback Jalen Ramsey so much that he faked a back injury to avoid playing for Jacksonville.

Khan adjusted his timeline after the NFL Players Association slammed Coughlin on Monday. The union said more than 25% of player grievances filed in the last two years have been against the Jaguars — against Coughlin, really — and warned players to "consider this when you have a chance to select your next club."

It was damage Khan had to address. "Mr. Khan was trying to send a message to the league and everyone else," Jones said. "No

one wants to have that on their team, where they have disgruntled players and they're trying to get money back and all that."

Marrone might not have to win his final two games, beginning Sunday at Atlanta (5-9), but he probably can't afford another embarrassment. The Jaguars (5-9) have lost 19 of their last 26 games, 11 of those by double digits and six by 20 or more points.

They dropped five straight by at least 17 points — the first NFL team to do that since Tampa Bay in 1986 — before scoring twice in the final 5:15 last week to upset Oakland 20-16. Players praised Marrone for keeping them from crumbling

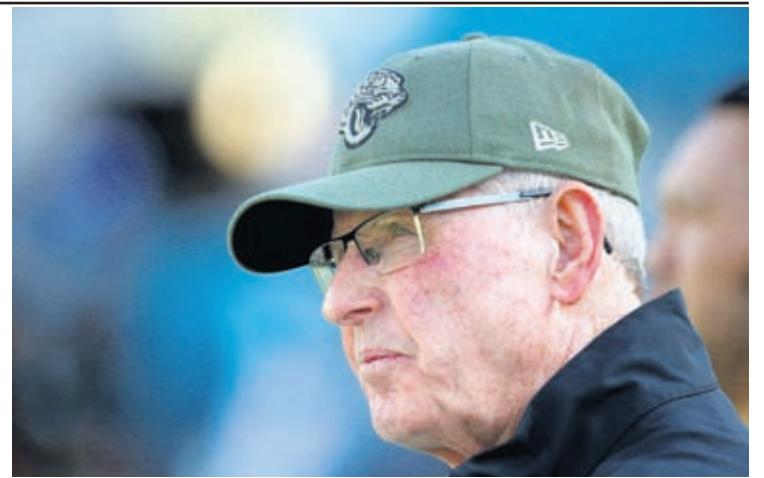
earlier amid one of the strangest seasons in franchise history. Among the drama:

—Linebacker Telvin Smith, the team's top tackler the past two seasons, abruptly walked away from football in May.

—Defensive end Yannick Ngakoue skipped most of the offseason and part of training camp in a contract dispute that remains unsettled.

—Quarterback Nick Foles broke his left collarbone 11 plays into the opener and missed eight games.

—Ramsey got in a heated sideline exchange with Marrone at Houston and a much-less public one with Coughlin after the Week 2



This photo taken Aug. 29, 2019, shows Tom Coughlin, executive vice president of football operations for the Jacksonville Jaguars watching players warm up before an NFL preseason football game in Jacksonville, Fla.

Associated Press

game. Ramsey demanded a trade and refused to play until he got shipped to the Los Angeles Rams.

"We've had a lot of noise," Campbell said. "Coach Marrone's done an incredible job keeping the guys focused and staying on the task at hand. That's impressive. He's a very good

coach."

Coughlin won two Super Bowls as coach of the New York Giants. But he clearly failed to make the transition from the sideline to the front office, unable to stop meddling in game plans and seemingly unwilling to ease up on his mandates and minutiae. □

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Orchid Casino
Located at Riu Antillas as formerly The Westin Resort.

Miami snaps 76ers' 14-game home winning streak, wins 108-104

By The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kendrick Nunn scored 26 points to help the Miami Heat hand the Philadelphia 76ers their first home loss of the season, 108-104 on Wednesday night.

The 76ers had been 14-0 at home, including a 113-86 victory over the Heat last month.

Tobias Harris buried a 3-pointer for the Sixers with 25.5 seconds left that made it 106-104 and they had sudden life when Nunn missed twice at the free throw line. Al Horford, though, missed an open 3-point attempt from the wing and the Heat escaped in a thriller.

Bam Adebayo scored 23 points and Duncan Robinson had 15 for the Heat. Robinson made a pair of 3s in the fourth that stretched the lead to 14 points, and Nunn buried a 30-footer for a 99-83 lead.

Joel Embiid, who missed Sunday's rout by the Nets with an upper respiratory illness, had 22 points and 19 rebounds. Harris scored 20 points.

Jimmy Butler scored 14 points for the Heat and was pretty much a non-factor until late in his second game back in Philadelphia.

PELICANS 107, TIMBERWOLVES 99

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Brandon Ingram scored 34 points and New Orleans snapped its 13-game losing streak with a win over short-handed Minnesota.

Jrue Holiday had 18 points and Lonzo Ball added 10 points, six rebounds and six assists off the bench for New Orleans, which was coming off a 108-101 overtime loss at home to Brooklyn a night earlier.

Playing without leading scorer and rebounder Karl-Anthony Towns, Minnesota lost its seventh straight game after shooting 38% from the field. Andrewiggins led the Timberwolves with 27 points.

RAPTORS 112, PISTONS 99

DETROIT (AP) — Kyle Lowry had 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for a triple-double and Toronto had an 11-0 run in the third quarter on its way to a win

over Detroit.

The Raptors were without guard Fred VanVleet be-

Sexton dribbled the ball off his foot and out of bounds with 16 seconds left. Rozier

oop basket gave the Bulls their first lead since the first quarter, 106-105 with 1:47

scored 14 of his 15 points during the third in his return from a strained quadriceps. Trailing 69-50 with 9:18 left in the third, the Nuggets stormed back as they held the Magic scoreless for more than six minutes.

Nikola Jokic added 18 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds.

Nikola Vucevic scored 20 for the Magic, while D.J. Augustin added 18.

CELTICS 109, MAVERICKS 103

DALLAS (AP) — Kemba Walker scored 32 points and Jaylen Brown had 26 as Boston beat Dallas.

Jayson Tatum added 24 points to help Boston prevail on a night when both teams were missing key players and struggled to shoot 40% from the field.

The Celtics held the Mavs 15 points below their season average, including a Dallas season-low 18 in the third quarter, with Luka Dončić's absence felt more than in Dallas' win Monday over Milwaukee.

Dončić sat out his second straight game for the Mavericks with a right ankle sprain, while Boston was without Gordon Hayward (left foot soreness) and Marcus Smart (left eye infection).

Kristaps Porzingis led Dallas with 23 points and 13 rebounds but fouled out in the final minute. Seth Curry added 20 points.

TRAIL BLAZERS 122, WARRIORS 112

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Damian Lillard had 31 points and a season-high 13 assists, Hassan Whiteside grabbed 23 rebounds and Portland beat Golden State.

CJ McCollum scored 30 points and Carmelo Anthony added 17 for Portland. Whiteside also scored 16 points.

D'Angelo Russell led Golden State with 26 points and seven assists.

Lillard set the tone in the first quarter. Going against the team he grew up rooting for, Lillard had 16 points and five assists in the opening quarter to help the Blazers build a 40-29 halftime lead. □



Miami Heat's Bam Adebayo (13) dunks the ball between Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21) and Mike Scott (1) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

cause of right knee injury. Then center Marc Gasol left in the first quarter with a left hamstring strain. Toronto still had enough firepower to handle the Pistons.

Detroit allowed 133 points in a loss to Washington on Monday night. The Pistons got frontcourt standouts Blake Griffin and Andre Drummond back from their injuries for this game, but they still allowed 70 points in the first half and 40 in the second quarter.

Drummond had 22 points and 18 rebounds for Detroit.

CAVALIERS 100, HORNETS 98

CLEVELAND (AP) — Collin Sexton scored 23 points, Cedi Osman had 18 and Cleveland held off a late Charlotte comeback.

Cleveland, which had lost 16 of 18, led the entire game but nearly squandered a 24-point lead in the third quarter.

Terry Rozier scored a career-high 35 points for Charlotte and hit five 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, the last coming with 21 seconds remaining to cut the deficit to 100-98.

popped open at the top of the key for a wide-open 3 with three seconds to go, but the shot hit off the rim and Sexton grabbed the rebound to finally secure the victory for the Cavs.

Rozier was 12 of 27 from the field and 7 of 15 on 3-pointers. Cody Zeller had 15 points for the Hornets.

Kevin Love had 16 points and 14 rebounds for Cleveland. Tristan Thompson added 14 points and 13 rebounds.

BULLS 110, WIZARDS 109

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wendell Carter Jr. made a layup with 9.1 seconds left in overtime, completing Chicago's rally from an 18-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat Washington.

Zach LaVine capped a 21-3 Bulls run with three free throws that tied the game at 96 with 5.5 seconds left in the fourth. Bradley Beal hit a jumper with 0.5 seconds remaining to put Washington ahead 98-96, but LaVine was fouled on the ensuing inbound play and hit two free throws to force OT.

Lauri Markkanen's alley-

left in overtime.

Markkanen had 31 points and nine rebounds, and LaVine added 24 points. Davis Bertans led Washington with 26 points, and Beal finished with 22.

In his return to Washington, former Wizards player Tomas Satoransky had 17 points.

THUNDER 126, GRIZZLIES 122

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Dennis Schroder scored 31 points, and Oklahoma City overcame a 24-point deficit and beat Memphis.

Danilo Gallinari and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander each scored 20 points and Chris Paul added 18 for the Thunder, who rallied from 26 points down to beat the Chicago Bulls on Monday. Brandon Clarke scored 27 points, Jonas Valanciunas scored 24 and Ja Morant added 22 for the Grizzlies.

NUGGETS 113, MAGIC 104

DENVER (AP) — Jamal Murray and Paul Millsap helped fuel a 24-0 run in the third quarter and Denver rallied to beat Orlando for the eighth straight time.

Murray finished with 33 points, including 13 in the pivotal third quarter. Millsap

Hockey player accepts team employee's apology for blackface

By JOHN WAWROW
AP Sports Writer

A Nigerian-born hockey player has accepted the apology of a minor league equipment manager who wore blackface to the team's Halloween party in 2011.

Akim Aliu also requested that the manager, Tony Deynzer, not lose his job over the incident, one of multiple examples of racism in the sport that Aliu has brought to light in recent weeks. In a joint statement released Tuesday, Aliu and the American Hockey League's Colorado Eagles said the two sides have had "candid discussions" over what happened and have agreed to work collaboratively to promote diversity and inclusiveness.

Aliu first made headlines late last month when he went public in alleging former Calgary Flames coach Bill Peters directed racial slurs at him while the two were in the minors 10 years ago. The allegations, which the coach acknowledged in a written apology, led to Peters' resignation.

Last week, Aliu revealed to The Wall Street Journal that Deynzer dressed up in blackface while wearing an Afro-style wig and a custom-made Eagles jersey with Aliu's number and nickname "DREAMER" printed on the back. Aliu also provided photographs of him posing with Deynzer. Aliu requested to be traded shortly after the party, and played only 10 games with the Eagles.

"I have accepted the apology by the Eagles and by Mr. Deynzer," said Aliu, a 30-year-old who grew up outside Toronto and spent most of his career playing in the minors and Europe.

"I believe we must confront racism head-on. I believe the time for big positive change in the sport has arrived and that this moment can be used to promote diversity, inclusiveness and

safety in the sport and our community."

The Eagles, who are the Colorado Avalanche's minor-league affiliate, placed Deynzer on administrative leave and publicly apologized to Aliu.

Team owner Martin Lind said he has since spoken with Aliu on several occasions, and called Deynzer's actions an "unacceptable racist incident."

"It is very apparent that Akim's heart for the human being is far greater and far outweighs any grievance from the past," Lind said.

"Listening to Akim was both emotional and inspirational, and a very moving moment in my career," he added.

"I let him know how sorry we were as an organization and how it in no way reflected our values."

The allegations by Akim prompted the NHL to move swiftly by strengthening its personnel conduct policies involving racism and bullying during its board of governors meetings last week. "Inclusion and diversity are not simply buzz words. They are foundational principles of the NHL," league commissioner Gary Bettman said. "Our message is unequivocal: We will not tolerate abusive behavior of any kind."

After the issues with Peters emerged, Chicago Blackhawks assistant coach Marc Crawford was accused of physical and verbal abuse by several players, and the team announced Monday he will remain suspended until Jan. 2 before resuming his duties. □

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Anaheim Ducks goaltender Ryan Miller (30) fends off New Jersey Devils center Nico Hischier (13) and right wing Kyle Palmieri (21) with help from Ducks center Sam Steel (34) during the third period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019, in Newark, N.J. The Devils won 3-1.

Associated Press

Hischier, Palmieri help Devils win 1st game post-Hall

By TOM CANAVAN
AP Sports Writer

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — The New Jersey Devils' decision to trade 2018 MVP Taylor Hall to Arizona has put pressure on other players to step up and lead the team.

In their first game since Monday's trade, Hall's former linemates Nico Hischier and Kyle Palmieri answered the call.

Hischier and Palmieri scored second-period goals and the Devils beat the Anaheim Ducks 3-1 on Wednesday night, giving them consecutive wins for only the fourth time this disappointing season.

"I think it's for the young guys coming up, it's those close games and finding ways to win or finding ways to close them out," Palmieri said. "Tonight, finding a way to come from behind and find a lead going into the third and come out there and keep playing on our toes. They had a couple looks but we held the fort."

Sami Vatanen also scored and Mackenzie Blackwood made 26 saves as the Devils gave interim coach Alain Nasreddine his second straight win.

Adam Henrique scored against his former team for the Ducks, who squandered an early 1-0 lead in losing to New Jersey for the first time in four games. Ryan Miller had 17 saves as Anaheim lost its second straight on a four-game East Coast trip.

"Obviously you get a good start and get a lead and go from there," Henrique said. "We have to find a way to get that next one. That's the key right now. We are having a hard time to get two and three and put out foot on the throat of the other team. That's an area that has to improve."

Anaheim defenseman Michael Del Zotto had a hand in the Devils' goals. He had a giveaway on Hischier's goal early in the second period and was in the penalty box for interference when Palmieri gave New Jersey a 2-1 lead at 11:29 of the second.

The journeyman defenseman lost a battle with No. 1 overall draft pick Jack Hughes in the corner early in the third period, leading to Vatanen's goal and a 3-1 lead.

Henrique gave Anaheim the lead, capping a 2-on-none with Ondrej Kase 3:33 after the opening faceoff.

The tide changed early in the second period when Del Zotto misplayed a puck sent around the boards. It deflected toward the net, where Jesper Bratt got the puck and found Hischier for a shot low in the right circle at 1:28.

Bratt is Hall's replacement at left wing on the line center by Hischier. Palmieri is on the right side.

"I feel comfortable playing with (Bratt)," Hischier said. "I came in with him in this league and have played a lot of games already with him. He's a great playmaker who can score, so it's a lot of fun to play with him."

Palmieri got his 13th of the season in the closing seconds of the penalty against Del Zotto. He made a toe-drag move on defenseman Cam Fowler and beat the screened goaltender from the right circle.

Vatanen extended the margin to two goals with a tally against his former team, and Blackwood made the lead standing up, making 11 saves in the final 20 minutes in giving New Jersey its first home win since Nov. 23 against Detroit. Blackwood negated the effort. □

Russia plans to file appeal against Olympic ban

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has signaled it will file an appeal against its four-year Olympic ban due to World Anti-Doping Agency sanctions which President Vladimir Putin on Thursday branded "unfair."

The Russian anti-doping agency's supervisory board voted Thursday to file an arbitration case with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Switzerland. WADA last week ruled Russia had manipulated doping laboratory data to cover up past offenses.

Putin said it was not fair to threaten Russia with more doping-related punishment, and that any sanctions should be on an individual basis. "I think it is not just unfair but not corresponding to common sense and law," Putin said. The case will likely be referred to CAS within the next 10-15 days, supervisory board chairman Alexander Ivlev said. After a panel of three CAS arbitrators is chosen, a verdict will be issued within three months.

"The ball will be in WADA's court and the issue will be discussed in a legal context," Ivlev said. "We consider the argumentation to be fairly strong and we will see how the issue develops."

Thursday's decision must be approved by another panel of Russian sports and anti-doping figures, but that seems a formality.

Most of the panel's members, including the Russian Olympic Committee and



This May 24, 2016 file photo shows a RUSADA sign that reads: "Russian National Anti-doping Agency" on a building in Moscow, Russia.

Russian Paralympic Committee, have said they want an appeal. Sports officials are likely to have substantial influence over how the case is argued and the hiring of lawyers, rather than leaving it in the hands of Russian anti-doping agency CEO Yuri Ganus. He is a frequent critic of top officials and has said the appeal has little chance of success.

Senior political figures including Putin had also signaled they wanted an appeal filed.

"We need to wait calmly for the relevant rulings, including the arbitration court ruling and we'll know what position we're in," Putin said Thursday. "Russian athletes have been training and will keep training for all competitions."

The WADA sanctions, announced last week, ban the use of the Russian team name, flag or anthem at a range of major sports competitions over the next four years, including next year's Olympics and the 2022 soccer World Cup.

However, Russian athletes will be allowed to compete as neutrals if they pass a vetting process which examines their history of drug testing, and possible involvement in cover-ups at the lab.

That has prompted anger from some Western athletes and organizations like the United States Anti-Doping Agency, which wanted a blanket ban on Russian athletes.

USADA chief executive Travis Tygart said he wasn't surprised by Russia's plans

to appeal and said it was another example of the country refusing to take responsibility for its doping program.

"Yet again, they deny accountability and continue to waste precious and limited resources in an effort to weasel out of the consequences, all the while leaving clean athletes of the world without justice or clarity on their path forward," Tygart said in a statement. "Let's hope CAS has the independence and courage to see through these machinations and finally stand firm and take decisive action that puts in place a complete ban, which is allowed for and proportional to the intentional fraud, deception, and destruction of clean athletes and the Olympic values seen here."

Putin added that WADA's recommended four-year ban on Russia hosting major sports competitions would have little effect, pointing to the 2022 men's volleyball world championships as an event Russia intends to keep.

WADA demands events are moved unless it's "legally or practically impossible" to do so, which could create a loophole for event organizers who don't want to break financial commitments.

That ban already doesn't apply to next year's European Championship soccer games in St. Petersburg or the 2021 Champions League final, both of which are exempt because they're continental, not world, championships.

Russia handed over the lab's doping data archive in January in return for having earlier sanctions lifted in 2018. WADA investigators found evidence that Russia was intensively editing the data in the weeks before the handover to remove signs of failed drug tests.

WADA said it found fake messages spliced into chat logs in an apparent attempt to smear former lab director Grigory Rodchenkov, who's become a key witness for WADA since leaving Russia.

Russia has produced its own report arguing that any editing was the result of illicit changes made from abroad, or the instability of the lab software. □

Shiffrin will skip World Cup races in France to rest, train

VAL D'ISERE, France (AP) — Mikaela Shiffrin is starting her Christmas racing break early by skipping a World Cup meeting in France this weekend.

After sitting out a training run Thursday ahead of a downhill scheduled Saturday, the three-time defending overall World Cup champion said she will now focus on preparing for Dec. 28-29 races in Austria.

"I was pretty excited, really — and it would have been the first time that I made that schedule work ... but

I have to get some work done now, so Merry Christmas and see you in Lienz!" Shiffrin wrote on her Twitter account.

Shiffrin would typically score well in the Alpine combined event, which includes a run of her best discipline slalom, scheduled Sunday at Val d'Isere. Her downhill form has been good with runner-up and 10th place finishes this season.

However, before the races are two days of downhill training runs that carry risk

and burn energy — more so in a packed week that included a rare Tuesday race, a giant slalom at nearby Courchevel.

Instead, she will train for slalom, and the giant slalom in which she is Olympic champion.

Shiffrin wrote Tuesday after placing 17th, her lowest-scoring race this season, that she would reassess her schedule. She also opted not to race in parallel slalom last Sunday at St. Moritz despite winning that event in Switzerland last season. □



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin enters the finish area of an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom in Courchevel, France, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

Associated Press



Spain's Rafael Nadal holds the tournament's best player award after Spain defeated Canada in the Davis Cup final in Madrid, Spain, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2019.

Associated Press

Nadal wins ATP sportsmanship award, Murray comeback player

LONDON (AP) — Rafael Nadal won his second consecutive Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award and third overall Thursday, based on voting by other players, while Andy Murray was chosen the ATP's 2019 comeback player of the year.

Murray, a three-time Grand Slam champion and former No. 1, said in January he thought he would retire this season because of a bad hip. But he wound up having a second operation and returned to the tour, winning a singles title and a doubles title.

Other honorees from the men's tour included U.S. Open semifinalist Matteo Berrettini, chosen as most

improved player after rising to No. 8 in the rankings from No. 54; 18-year-old Jannik Sinner, picked as newcomer of the year; and Gilles Cervara, who earned coach of the year honors after helping Daniil Medvedev reach nine finals, including a runner-up finish to Nadal at Flushing Meadows.

Kevin Anderson received the Arthur Ashe Humanitarian Award.

The International Tennis Federation also announced its year-end awards Thursday, with year-end No. 1s Nadal and Ash Barty named ITF World Champions.

It's Nadal's fourth selection, Barty's first. □

FIFA rankings: WCup host Qatar rises to No. 55, Belgium top

ZURICH (AP) — Qatar made the biggest move up FIFA's world rankings in 2019, driven by winning the Asian Cup.

FIFA's year-end rankings published Thursday put Belgium at No. 1 for the second straight year.

Qatar kicked off at the Asian Cup in January as the world No. 93 team, and jumped 38 places to No. 55 after beating Japan in the final.

The 2022 World Cup host has maintained the same place through a year that included playing as an invited team at the Copa America and in qualifying games for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Qatar, which never qualified for any previous World Cup, is ranked higher than the previous host Russia was, at No. 70, when that tournament kicked off in June 2018. Russia outperformed expectations by reaching the quarterfinals. □



Boise State head coach Bryan Harsin poses alongside showgirl Jennifer Autry ahead of the Las Vegas Bowl NCAA college football game in Las Vegas, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

Associated Press

Watch every bowl?

Continued from Page 17

New Mexico Bowl Albuquerque

Central Michigan vs. San Diego State, 2 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: San Diego State minus 3.5. Why watch? You are that rare Florida fan who thought Jim McElwain, now coaching at CMU, really got a raw deal in Gainesville, and you want to root him on to a bowl victory. Pick: SAN DIEGO STATE 20-16.

Cure Bowl Orlando, Florida

Liberty vs. Georgia Southern, 2:30 p.m. (CBSSN)

Line: Georgia Southern minus 5.

Why watch? Remember when Liberty coach Hugh Freeze began the season coaching from a hospital bed? Tune in to find out how he's doing. Pick: GEORGIA SOUTHERN 21-19.

Boca Raton (Florida) Bowl

SMU vs. FAU, 3:30 p.m. (ABC)

Line: SMU minus 3.

Why watch? The program that survived the NCAA death penalty vs. the program that survived Lane Kiffin. Pick: SMU 35-30.

Camellia Bowl

Montgomery, Alabama

FIU vs. Arkansas State, 5:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: Arkansas State minus 2.5.

Why watch? FIU gave up 50 points to Middle Tennessee and then beat Miami

for the biggest victory in program history. How does that happen?

Pick: ARKANSAS STATE 31-27.

Las Vegas Bowl

Boise State vs. Washington, 7:30 p.m. (ABC)

Line: Washington minus 3.5. Why watch? Chris Petersen's final game before stepping down as Washington coach comes against his former team. Should be a quality sendoff for one of the most successful coaches of the past two decades. Pick: WASHINGTON 27-21.

New Orleans Bowl

UAB vs. Appalachian State, 9 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: Appalachian State minus 17.

Why watch? App State beat two Power Five teams and probably deserves better than the New Orleans Bowl. The least you could do is watch the Mountaineers try to wrap up a 13-win season. Pick: APP STATE 35-14.

Monday, Dec. 23

Gasparilla Bowl

Tampa, Florida

UCF vs. Marshall, 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: UCF minus 17.

Why watch? Remember when UCF was a big deal? Ahh, those were the days. Pick: UCF 38-17.

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Hawaii Bowl

Honolulu

BYU vs. Hawaii, 8 p.m.

(ESPN)

Line: BYU minus 1.5.

Why watch? When you're putting together that bicycle you got your kid for Christmas, the Hawaii Bowl can distract you from worrying about all those "extra" parts. Pick: BYU 24-21.

Thursday, Dec. 26

Independence Bowl

Shreveport, Louisiana

Miami vs. Louisiana Tech, 4 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: Miami minus 6.5.

Why watch? At some point, the 6-6 Hurricanes will break out the Turnover Chain ... in Shreveport ... against a Conference USA team ... without a shred of irony or self awareness. Pick: MIAMI 28-20.

Quick Lane Bowl

Detroit

Pittsburgh vs. Eastern Michigan, 8 p.m. (ESPN)

Line: Pitt minus 11.5.

Why watch? Feeling bloated and weary the day after Christmas? Have we got a bowl game for you. Pick: PITT 35-17.

Friday, Dec. 27

Military Bowl

Annapolis, Md.

North Carolina vs. Temple, Noon (ESPN)

Line: North Carolina minus 5.

Why watch? Catch the best freshman quarterback in the country: Sam Howell of the Tar Heels threw for 3,347 yards and 35 touchdowns. □

Why some cities and states balk at face recognition tech

By **MATT O'BRIEN**
AP Technology Writer
SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)

— Police departments around the U.S. are asking citizens to trust them to use facial recognition software as another handy tool in their crime-fighting toolbox. But some lawmakers — and even some technology giants — are hitting the brakes.

Are fears of an all-seeing, artificially intelligent security apparatus overblown? Not if you look at China, where advancements in computer vision applied to vast networks of street cameras have enabled authorities to track members of ethnic minority groups for signs of subversive behavior.

American police officials and their video surveillance industry partners contend that won't happen here.

They are pushing back against a movement by cities, states and federal legislators to ban or curtail the technology's use. And the efforts aren't confined to typical bastions of liberal activism that enacted bans this year: San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley and the Boston suburbs of Somerville and Brookline.

Take the western Massachusetts city of Springfield, a former manufacturing hub where a majority of the 155,000 residents are Latino or black, and where police brutality and misconduct lawsuits have cost the city millions of dollars. Springfield police say they have no plans to deploy facial recognition systems, but some city councilors are moving to block any future government use of the technology anyway.

At an October hearing on the subject, Springfield City Councilor Orlando Ramos said he doesn't want to take any chances. "It would only lead to more racial discrimination and racial profiling," he said, citing studies that found higher error rates for facial recognition software used to identify women and people with darker skin tones.

"I'm a black woman and I'm dark," another Springfield councilor, Tracye

Whitfield, told the city's police commissioner, Cheryl Clapprood, who is white.

A review of the industry's leading facial recognition algorithms by the National

the legal, ethical and publicity risks of a technology that is facing backlash from

pects for other crimes.

Smith said the technology would wrongly identify too many people, especially women and people of color. The executive has warned that unregulated facial recognition could unleash "mass surveillance on an unprecedented scale," though he's opposed to an outright ban. Microsoft in November hired an attorney to speak out against a proposed ban in Portland, Maine.

Other companies including Amazon, which markets a face identification system called Rekognition to law enforcement, have shown fewer qualms about selling their technology to police. Some law enforcement agencies feed images from video surveillance into software that can search government databases or social media for a possible match.

Todd Pastorini, general manager at biometric forensics company DataWorks Plus, said it's important to distinguish between real-time crowd surveillance — which is rare in the U.S. — and the "extremely effective" method of running images through a pool of known police mugshots or driver's license photos to help identify a suspect.

"Society and the public are going to get frustrated" if governments block law enforcement from adopting a technology that keeps improving, he said.

Among his South Carolina company's biggest face-matching clients are Detroit and New York City, the latter of which first adopted facial recognition in 2011 and also uses software from French company Idemia.

"I'd absolutely be opposed to a ban," New York City Police Commissioner James O'Neill told reporters this fall.

O'Neill, who retired in early December, added that facial recognition hits are just one part of an investigation.

"There is so much video in New York City today that to not use facial recognition would be irresponsible," he said. □



In this Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 photo, a video surveillance camera hangs on a pole outside City Hall in Springfield, Mass.

Associated Press

"I cannot approve something that's going to target me more than it will target you."

Clapprood defended the technology and asked the council to trust her to pursue it carefully. "The facial recognition technology does not come along and drop a net from the sky and carry you off to prison," she said, noting that it could serve as a useful investigative tool by flagging wanted suspects.

The council hasn't yet acted, and the Springfield mayor has threatened to veto the proposal that Ramos plans to re-introduce in January.

Similar debates across the country are highlighting racial concerns and dueling interpretations of the technology's accuracy.

"I wish our leadership would look at the science and not at the hysteria," said Lancaster, California, Mayor R. Rex Parris, whose city north of Los Angeles is working to install more than 10,000 streetlight cameras. Parris says could monitor known pedophiles and gang members. "There are ways to build in safeguards."

Research suggests that facial recognition systems can be accurate, at least under ideal conditions.

Institute of Standards and Technology found they were more than 99% accurate when matching high-quality head shots to a database of other frontal poses.

But trying to identify a face from a video feed — a potentially useful technique for detectives — can cause accuracy rates to plunge. NIST found that recognition accuracy could fall below 10% when using ceiling-mounted cameras commonly found in stores and government buildings. The agency hasn't studied the performance of facial recognition on body camera footage, although experts generally believe that its often-jumpy video will render the technique even less reliable.

In October, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a temporary ban on police departments using facial recognition with body cameras. Some other states have similar restrictions.

While California's three-year moratorium was opposed by law enforcement groups, companies that provide video-surveillance equipment have mostly reacted with shrugs. Many businesses were already moving carefully before subjecting themselves to

privacy, civil liberties and racial justice advocates, not to mention bipartisan concern in Congress.

Axon, which supplies body-worn cameras to most of California's big cities and is the biggest provider nationwide, had already formed an AI ethics board of outside experts that concluded facial recognition technology isn't yet reliable enough to justify its use on police cameras. False identification could lead someone to be hurt or killed, said Axon CEO Rick Smith.

Even if facial recognition software was perfectly accurate, Smith said in an interview, the ability to track people's whereabouts raises constitutional and privacy concerns. "Do we want everybody who walks near a police officer to get their face identified and logged in a database?" he said.

Microsoft last year turned down an unnamed California police agency's request to equip all police cars and body cameras with Microsoft's facial recognition software, the company's president and chief legal officer Brad Smith wrote in a new book on tech policy. He said police wanted to match a photo of anyone pulled over, even routinely, against a database of sus-

After ebullient 2019, Wall Street warns of slower road ahead

By STAN CHOE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — After a year of nirvana, investors may need to get ready for something a little more normal.

Markets are coming off a fabulous 2019, where stocks and bonds around the world climbed in concert. But for the next year — and decade, in fact — Wall Street is telling investors to set their expectations considerably lower. It's not calling for another crash like the U.S. stock market suffered just over a decade ago. Or for another run like the last 10 years, where the S&P 500 returned more than 13% on an annualized basis. A gain less than half of that may be more likely, both for next year and annually for the coming decade.

"People need to have a more realistic expectation of what returns are going to be," said Greg Davis, chief investment officer at Vanguard. "That means investors who are saving for retirement or for college education will likely need to set aside more, because returns won't be as generous as what we've seen over the last decade."

It's not because Wall Street sees the U.S. economy falling into a recession, at least not in 2020, even though that's been a recurring fear for much of the last decade. Much of Wall Street expects the economy to chug modestly higher next year.

Instead, it's a simple matter of math. Stocks and bonds don't have as much room to rise after their stellar 2019, analysts say. Starting points matter, and investments began this year at a low point after recession worries pounded markets in December 2018. U.S. stocks will start 2020, meanwhile, close to their highest levels ever.

Plus, one of the biggest reasons for this past year's stellar returns — a major about-face by the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates — can't happen again.

WHY WAS 2019 SO GOOD?

Coming into this year, the



In this Aug. 7, 2019, file photo trader John Romolo works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Associated Press

mood in markets was one of fear.

The S&P 500 had tumbled 19.8% between Sept. 20, 2018 and Dec. 24, 2018. Investors were worried that the Federal Reserve was raising interest rates too far and too fast and could cause a recession. President Donald Trump's trade war with China was also threatening economic growth.

But markets relaxed shortly after the calendar flipped, when Fed Chairman Jerome Powell pledged on Jan. 4 to be "patient." Investors took that to mean the Fed would stop raising interest rates. Later in the summer, the Fed would go even further and cut rates three times to shield the economy from the effects of trade tensions and slowing economies abroad.

They were the first rate cuts in more than a decade, and the sharp reversal in Fed policy helped relieve investors' anxiety about a potential recession. Lower rates make borrowing cheaper and help industries like housing and autos in particular, where customers typically have to borrow to buy.

Lower rates also mean bonds pay less in interest, which in turn makes the dividends paid by stocks more attractive to income-

seeking investors. Low rates helped stock prices rise in 2019 even as profits fell for many big U.S. companies. Along with the Fed, give credit for the resilient economy to U.S. households, which kept spending even when uncertainty about trade pushed CEOs to hold off on their own investments. "The greatest asset in the economy is the consumer, and the U.S. consumer continues to be on strong footing," said Mike Dowdall, investment strategist at BMO Global Asset Management.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2020

Heading into 2020, the mood is much more giddy, but Wall Street is trying to rein in expectations. Vanguard forecasts U.S. stocks will return 3.5% to 5.5% annually over the coming decade. Even toward the top end of that range, it's only half what the market has returned

historically. Foreign stocks might offer a bit more, at roughly 7.5% annually, but U.S. bonds look set to offer only 2% or 3% annually over the next decade, according to Vanguard.

Of course, any prediction about where investments will end up is only a guess, no matter how educated. Many on Wall Street came into this year expecting only modest returns given all the worries about interest rates and a possible recession. Now, the S&P 500 is about to close out its second-best year of the last two decades.

But for bonds, the reasons for lower expected returns are easy to see. Bonds pay much less in interest than one or 10 years ago. The 10-year Treasury now has a yield of 1.93 %, versus 2.82% a year ago and 3.54 % a decade ago. For bonds to return more than their yields, rates will need

to drop even lower.


Some banks along Wall Street have relatively healthy expectations for stocks in 2020 — but few if any are calling for a repeat of 2019's surge for the S&P 500, which was at 27.6% as of Thursday morning. Bank of America Merrill Lynch sees the index ending 2020 at 3,300, which would be a 3.2 % rise, for example. Goldman Sachs is more bullish, with a target of 3,400, but that would still be less than a quarter of this year's gain.

Stocks are more expensive than a year ago on a host of different measures. One of the most commonly used is how a stock's price compares to its profit over the preceding year. By that measure, the S&P 500 is trading at 20.9 times its earnings. That's more expensive than at the start of the year, when it was at 16.5, or its average over the last two decades of 17.7, according to FactSet. Low interest rates should help keep this price-earnings valuation high, analysts say. So will a U.S.-China trade conflict that's hopefully no longer ramping higher, analysts say. The diminished threat of a recession should keep investors willing to pay relatively high price-earnings ratios. But the threat of policy changes in Washington, D.C., could act as a counterweight. □




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Mutts



6 Chix



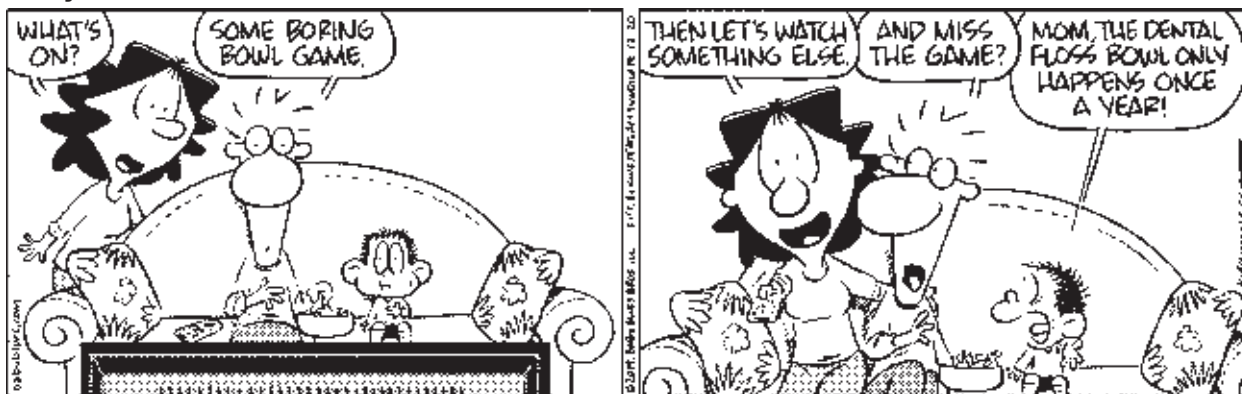
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

8		4				6		2
9			4		6			5
	7		2		4			
		1		5				
	1		6		7			
6		2		7				4
5	3				1			8

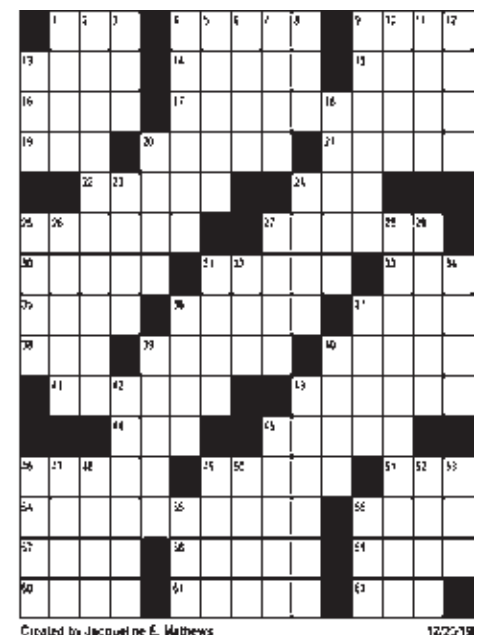
Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

3	9	4	8	7	6	5	2	1
7	5	2	4	1	9	3	6	8
1	8	6	5	2	3	4	9	7
4	2	1	3	9	8	7	5	6
6	7	8	1	4	5	2	3	9
9	3	5	2	6	7	8	1	4
8	6	7	9	5	2	1	4	3
2	1	3	6	8	4	9	7	5
5	4	9	7	3	1	6	8	2

- ACROSS**
- Noisy bird
 - 21st-century U.S. president
 - Poison ivy symptom
 - Give a foot
 - Word before bears or opposites
 - Oxford or Icalor
 - Abysses
 - Smile or frown
 - Large great-heavyweight
 - Frock
 - Young hoodlums
 - Dog's misery
 - "Whiz"
 - Scarf staples
 - Banquets
 - Tooth problem
 - Socrates or Oracles
 - Knock
 - Passionate
 - Smooth and snaky
 - Capsule
 - cul-de-sac
 - Strikes with an open palm
 - Disney dog
 - On a cloud nine
 - All thumbs
 - I do for one
 - Vase
 - mar-berdes
 - Fine mist
 - Warm welcome
 - Drugstore
 - Out of danger
 - All listening
 - Spouses
 - Shoe lace problem
 - Running shoe brand
 - Florence's place
 - Common contraction



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

12/22/19

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

PAID	SCAMP	BLOW
ARMY	PONES	IOWA
LAME	OUTWITTING	
ETA	DONS	RINSE
THEFT	WON	
SHEENS	COUGAR	
TARRY	FLEET	LUG
AVID	DEANS	STIR
BOA	COAST	CLONE
CLARET	SHAGGY	
GAS	GNOME	
STEEP	SDAP	TWO
TRANSISTOR	CHAD	
QUEST	TEASE	HELD
WEIS	SAGES	IRKS

DOWN

- Lookup
- Faux
- Positive reply
- Tosca & Carmen
- Orates
- Great place to see
- One of the panels
- Roses red, violets...
- Magazine editions
- Slippy
- Chef
- Roosters' mates
- Many a tax preparer for short
- Utter
- Reluctant to admit
- Penol's core
- Computer tech. often
- Actor West
- Embankment
- Changes
- Just a tiny victorious
- Seasons at the table
- Eated
- Elected official
- acbr
- Strangem
- Murdered
- ! The Herd
- Angel's Sing
- Take a hike
- Pocket bread
- Eerie sightings for short
- it understand
- Persian pal
- Word before ill or boots

Tiger quadruplets in Berlin zoo treated for knee problems

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A Berlin zoo says four young Sumatran tigers are undergoing treatment for knee problems.

The quadruplets were born in the summer of 2018 and as they started to develop, zookeepers noticed abnormalities in the way the cubs ran, the Tierpark Berlin said Wednesday.

That damage is now being treated, and an expert team is to sit down in the new year to discuss long-term strategies to help the tigers. "We don't want to just rely on our own judgement. We will sit down with other experts," zoo manager Christian Kern said. "Animal welfare is our top priority." Aside from their knee problems, the animals - males Willi and Oscar and females Seri and Kiara - are doing well, exhibiting normal eating habits and playing with each other, according to the zoo. □

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2-BR OceanFront \$26K
GoldSeason
1-Br OceanView \$4K
2-BR OceanView \$9K

ArubaDiviPhoenix

2-BRPH WK49 &50
building7/ 7thfloor
32weeks on each \$24K each
2-BRPH WK #1
building6 / 7 thfloor
28weeks \$30K

ArubaDiviPhoenix

2 BR WK 50
building6/3rdfloor
33weeks \$22K
1-BR/WK#2
building8/groundfloor
32weeksremain \$16K

DiviLinksGolf

1-BR WK51 \$12,5K
Birdie 1 with 26 weeks
2BR WK51 \$24K
Birdie 1 with 26 weeks
'1-BR WK#1& 2
Birdie 9 with 30 weeksremaining
on each \$10K each
Studio WK#2 \$7,5K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks
'1-BR WK#3 \$9K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks

DiviVillage

5th-floor building-C
25weeks remain on each
1-BR wk#1 \$8,500
Studio/wk#1 \$7,500

DiviLinksGolf

2 BR/WK# 3 \$22K
Eagle 8 with 25 weeks
DiviVillage
studio/wk#1 \$7K
buildingC with 34 weeks
La Cabana Beach Resort
2BR E unit wk 49 /50ocean front
grond floor \$15 K each

DutchVillage:

studio wk#52 \$7500
17weeks 9 accelerated
DiviLinksGolf
\$7,500
Studio wk#1 building4
24-weeks 8-accelerated

DiviLinksGolf

1-BR WK#4 \$8K
birdie-1 with 20 weeks
studio/wk#5 \$8,000
birdie-4 with 28weeks
EagleResorts
3-BR wk#51 \$25K
1-BR wk#51&52 \$25K
bothweeks

La CabanaBeachResort

Thursday check-in 4thfloor
studio wk#52/1 \$7,5K each
1-BR wk#52/1 \$8,5K each
1-BR wk#52 \$8,5K

La Cabana Beach

sunday check in
1 BR wk 49
2sd floor \$5,5 K
1 BR wk 50
3rd floor \$5,5 K

Renaissancesuites

1-BR wk#49/50 \$6,5K each
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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
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Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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U.S. permits sale of cigarettes with 95% less nicotine

By **MATTHEW PERRONE**

AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health officials on Tuesday endorsed a type of cigarette that could help ease the addictive grip of smoking by delivering very low levels of nicotine.

The Food and Drug Administration will allow 22nd Century Group to begin selling the first low-nicotine cigarettes reviewed by federal health regulators. The products contain roughly 95% less nicotine than standard cigarettes, according to the FDA.

Nicotine, which occurs naturally in tobacco plants, is the addictive chemical that makes cigarettes, chew and related products so hard to quit. Past efforts to sell similar low-nicotine products have fallen flat. Regulators stressed that their ruling does not mean the new products are safer than regular cigarettes. The agency noted there are no safe tobacco products. Cigarettes cause cancer, lung disease, stroke and a number of other deadly diseases.

But the agency's tobacco



This Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019 photo shows a group of cigarettes in New York.

Associated Press

chief, Mitch Zeller, noted in a statement that 22nd Century Group's products are the first cigarettes to show the potential "to help reduce nicotine dependence among addicted smokers."

The FDA is continuing to review a separate application from the company on whether the cigarettes present a reduced risk to smokers.

The U.S. smoking rate has fallen to an all-time low of 14% of adults, or roughly 34 million Americans. But smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S., responsible for some 480,000 deaths annually. Low-nicotine cigarettes are not a new idea. Philip Morris experimented with selling a line of them in the U.S. in the late 1980s, without

much success. Since then, most low-nicotine cigarettes have been used for research purposes to study addiction in smokers. Kenneth Warner, a tobacco expert at the University of Michigan's school of public health, called the idea "good in concept," but said he would be "astonished if there's much of a market for this." There are several tech-

niques for reducing nicotine, including chemical extraction and cross-breeding plants.

Williamsville, New York-based 22nd Century Group plans to sell its cigarettes under the brand name Moonlight, in regular and menthol flavor.

Last year, the FDA began the process for regulating nicotine in cigarettes to make them minimally or non-addictive. But the agency recently dropped the nicotine plan from its list of regulatory priorities. And tobacco companies have signaled their opposition. The FDA has sponsored several studies showing that when smokers switch to low-nicotine cigarettes they smoke less and are more likely to try quitting. The research was considered pivotal to establishing that smokers won't compensate by smoking more cigarettes or inhaling more deeply if nicotine levels are low. That was sometimes the case with "light" and "low tar" cigarettes marketed in decades past. Those products were banned as misleading. □



This Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019 photo shows a group of cigarettes in New York.

Associated Press

WHO sees tobacco drop among men, but vaping effects unclear

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Worldwide, the number of men using traditional tobacco products has finally started to decline, health officials said Thursday.

Four out of five tobacco users globally are men, so declines among males "mark a turning point in the fight against tobacco," Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, said in a statement.

The agency's new report covers an array of tobacco use, including cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco.

But the WHO did not count electronic cigarettes as tobacco products, and officials could not say what impact the growing popu-

larity of vaping devices has had in diverting people from traditional smoking.

WHO officials said they plan to release a report on e-cigarette use early next year.

Researchers previously reported declines in male and female smoking rates internationally, but the drop wasn't enough to offset the growth in world population. The number of female tobacco users did shrink since 2000, but the number of male tobacco users continued to edge up, bringing the total to more than 1.3 billion people.

That appears to have changed last year, the agency said.

And the WHO now estimates the number of male tobacco users will decline by more than 1 million next

year and by 5 million by 2025.

The agency said the decline is driven mainly by a decrease in the number of males who exclusively use smokeless tobacco.

The WHO report found that countries in southeast Asia had the world's highest rates of tobacco use — 45% among males and females age 15 and older. But that percentage also is projected to decline, officials said.

In a call with reporters, the WHO's Dr. Alison Commar noted that smokeless tobacco use was once common among all women in India and some other Asian countries, but lately it's mainly seen only in older women.

"It seems to be a dying tradition," she said. □

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Miss America to be crowned for the first time in Connecticut

By SUSAN HAIGH

Associated Press

UNCASVILLE, Conn. (AP)

— Miss America will be crowned Thursday night for the first time at a Connecticut casino, marking the latest change to the nearly century-old contest that has recently undergone new leadership and a new direction.

The competition, now dubbed “Miss America 2.0” and no longer referred to by organizers as a “pageant,” had announced plans this summer to leave Atlantic City, New Jersey — for the second time in its history — and hold the multi-day event at the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville. Miss America also switched from ABC back to NBC to broadcast the glitzy finale to an estimated 4.5 million viewers. And for the first time, preliminary events and the finale — held in Mohegan’s 10,000-seat arena — are being streamed live on the NBC app.

“We are looking forward to a fresh take on this historic competition that will showcase the incredible women vying for the job of Miss America 2020,” Regina Hopper, president & CEO of the Miss America Organization, said in the July an-



In this Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, file photo, candidates for Miss America 2020 pose for a group photo during the official Arrival Ceremony for the Miss America 2.0 competition at Mohegan Sun. Associated Press

nouncement.

For Mohegan Sun, it’s been an opportunity to showcase the massive casino, entertainment and convention complex, located on an Indian reservation in suburban southeastern Connecticut, to a national audience. The Mohegan Sun name has been mentioned prominently in NBC’s TV ads promoting the event, which is being held

later in the year as part of NBC’s holiday programming.

Hamilton said Mohegan Sun hopes it will be chosen to continue hosting the event, which is credited with filling up the casino’s hotel rooms during a relatively slow time of year and attracting an estimated 15,000 visitors to the complex, which bills itself as a destination resort in a Northeast casino mar-

ket that has become more and more crowded in recent years.

“I think as we try to grow group and event room-nights, hosting these large events has been a strategic initiative for us,” he said. “Our goal is to host these large events which are going to bring people to the property that might not have come.”

Miss America organiz-

ers and NBC have not yet agreed to a multi-year contract with the Connecticut casino. A decision is expected in the coming months.

Fifty-one women, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, have spent the past week competing in different events for more than \$300,000 scholarship money, including talent exhibitions and interviews. Preliminary competitions were held Dec. 15 and 16. The ultimate winner will be awarded a \$50,000 scholarship and “the job of Miss America,” succeeding 2019 Miss America Nia Franklin, a classically trained opera singer from New York who didn’t have to don a swimsuit to win the coveted crown.

For the second year in a row, there will be no swimsuit or evening gown competitions, with organizers stressing that participants are not judged on outward physical appearance. Those events were replaced by onstage interviews and opportunities for the women to discuss their personal achievements, life goals, talents and a planned “social impact initiative” as the 2020 Miss America. □

Amy Winehouse exhibit to open at Grammy Museum

By MESFIN FEKADU

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The first-ever Amy Winehouse exhibit in the United States will debut at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles next month.

The Recording Academy told The Associated Press on Thursday that the late British singer’s popular outfits — including her halter dress worn at her final stage performance in Belgrade in 2011 — never-before-seen handwritten lyrics and home video, journal entries and more from her family’s personal archive will make up “Beyond Black — The Style of Amy Winehouse.” The exhibit opens Jan. 17 and will run through April 13. Winehouse died July 23, 2011, at her London



In this Aug. 17, 2008 file photo, British singer Amy Winehouse performs at the V Festival in Chelmsford, Essex. Associated Press

home from accidental alcohol poisoning at age 27. She only released two albums, “Frank” and “Back to Black,” but had a tremendous impact on music fans and her peers, being praised for her jazz-like vocals and honest lyrics.

She won five Grammys at the 2008 show, which she couldn’t attend because was rejected for a U.S. work visa.

The singer, whose hits included “Rehab” and “You Know I’m No Good,” was also known for her distinc-

tive look, including her beehive hairdo, cat eye-liner, ballet shoes, tattoos and more.

“Amy always credited my mother, her grandmother Cynthia, as a major influence, both stylistically — as she taught her the importance of grooming and having a look — and musically,” the singer’s father, Mitch Winehouse, said in a statement. “She liked to call me a ‘cab-driving Sinatra’ and her mother’s side of the family were also musicians. Amy not only brought her gift of music to the world, but also her fashion. We’re eager for people to see her bold, beautiful spirit through all forms of her creativity.”

The exhibit will also include custom-made, but

never worn dresses by Winehouse’s stylist, Naomi Parry, for the singer’s canceled 2011 summer festival tour; Winehouse’s yellow Preen power dress and red leather heart-shaped Moschino purse from 2007 BRIT Awards; Winehouse’s 2008 Grammys outfit designed by Dolce & Gabbana; capsule collections designed by Winehouse for Fred Perry’s line, including a black cotton twill varsity-style jacket with gray leather sleeves monogrammed with “Amy” in the front; and a mohair leopard-style pattern cardigan by Dolce & Gabbana that Winehouse was photographed wearing leaving one of her favorite places, the Hawley Arms Pub, in Camden, London. □

On screen, Asian Americans rarely get into Christmas spirit

By **TERRY TANG**
Associated Press

With its multiple teenage characters, the Netflix movie “Let It Snow” is a mix of holiday feels and a John Hughes comedy. But unlike those genres, the movie, about a small town besieged by a Christmas Eve snowstorm, has Asian American characters front and center who aren’t there just to be comedic

relief. Jacob Batalon (Marvel’s “Spider-Man” movies) and Anna Akana (“Ant-Man”) play an aspiring DJ and closeted lesbian cheerleader, respectively. For Akana, nothing felt token about the role. “I never felt like I’d been cast because ‘This girl checks the gay box and the Asian box,’” said Akana, who is of Japanese, Filipino and Hawaiian de-



In this image released by Lifetime, Tatyana Ali, left, and Sean Patrick Thomas, appear in the holiday movie, “Christmas Hotel.”

Associated Press

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MON-THU 5:40 | 8:20

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MON-FRI 4:10 | 6:35 | 9:00

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SPANISH

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scent. “We were finally seeing the world as we’ve known about it, and Hollywood is slowly catching up.”

With the yuletide season in full swing, studios and TV networks have been unwrapping tales that are predominantly white Christmases. The diversity issue was skewered on “Saturday Night Live” in a skit about the Hallmark Channel, which generated a firestorm over the weekend for dropping ads featuring a same-sex couple. Except for Universal Pictures’ “Last Christmas” with “Crazy Rich Asians” stars Henry Golding and Michelle Yeoh, Asian American Pacific Islanders are rarely leads in the genre. Latinos also rarely make the cut. However, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of black actors in movies from Hallmark, Lifetime and niche outlets like the Oprah Winfrey Network.

The disproportionate representation is somewhat mystifying when you consider Asian Americans have the highest growth rates in population and purchasing power of any U.S. ethnic or racial group, according to a Nielsen study released in May. The report found Asian Americans spent \$1 trillion in 2018. It also found that 81% of all Asian Ameri-

can households subscribe to at least one subscription video on demand platform — 19% higher than the total population.

Tatyana Ali, of “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” fame, has done five Christmas TV movies and even produced one. Based on her fan interactions, she says it’s clear that viewers care about diversity.

“They literally always bring up how nice it is,” said Ali, who stars in “Christmas Hotel” airing Dec. 21 on Lifetime. “These are people who have been fans of Christmas movies for years and they always bring up how nice it is to see people of color, how much more exciting it is for them to tune in.”

Candice Frederick, an entertainment reporter and critic based in New York City, said studios, especially in TV, are still “more willing to throw away millions of dollars on a white actor than an actor of color.”

Though Hallmark films seem to cater to an audience that’s “very white middle America who eat that up,” networks like BET can go after other demographics.

Tina Perry, president of OWN, said filling roles with more diverse actors in general is a great way to sprinkle unique cultural nuances in a very formulaic genre.

The network’s three original holiday movies have all-black casts. “There’ll be a distinction I think for viewers when they watch and compare the Hallmark and Lifetime (movies) with our movies,” Perry said. Even the music is “more jazzy, R&B, a little soulful, which I think is going to be really fun for our viewers and just give it a different feel.”

Akana, 30, thinks the issue is with a Hollywood system that’s still shedding racist stereotypes while claiming there are few Asian actors. For a long time, she said most of the auditions she got were for stereotypical parts like a massage therapist or the girl who was “upset she got a B.” She credits her YouTube channel, which has 2.5 million subscribers, for helping her leverage better auditions.

Jenny Han, author of “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” and a producer on the Netflix film adaptation, said it’s frustrating as an adult to look back at some of these movies and see hardly any-one of color.

Why make a fuss over a genre that’s often a punching bag for its light and fluffy nature? Well, that’s the point, says the Korean American scribe. Stories about minorities don’t always have to be “about pain and struggle.” □

2019 Breakthrough Entertainer: Jack Quaid of 'The Boys'

By AMANDA LEE MYERS

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — If you're an actor, and your parents just happen to be Meg Ryan and Dennis Quaid, you may have to get used to movie makers assuming that you're an entitled jerk.

Jack Quaid says that just means he has to work harder to prove them wrong.

The 27-year-old Quaid is quick to point out that he's been a very lucky man before he'll get into the stereotypes about the sons and daughters of very famous people.

"I don't want to necessarily complain about growing up the way that I did because there was always food on the table, I got to live in a nice house ... This is me checking my privilege. It's there. It's totally there," he said. "But there's a little bit of an attitude that I've gotten, especially as I was starting out. Like, I would walk into an audition room and people would just assume I would be a (jerk)." Quaid, who looks like his mother when he's delighted and his father when he's indignant, recalled one audition in particular.

"The casting director looked at me and said, 'Oh



This Dec. 3, 2019 photo shows actor Jack Quaid posing for a portrait in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

wow, that was actually really good. I thought you'd come in here and expect it to be handed to you and just be really entitled about it," he said. "I was like, 'No, I just genuinely want to do this. And if I'm lucky enough to get this part, I'll do my best.'"

Quaid's best has been particularly good this year. He's earned widespread attention for the first time since he fell in love with acting at the age of 13 (in a middle

school rendition of "A Midsummer Night's Dream"). Quaid stars in "The Boys," an irreverent genre-busting superhero show that's among the most successful original programs on Amazon Prime Video. The show premiered in July, less than two weeks before the release of "Plus One," a romantic comedy starring Quaid and Maya Erskine that won the Narrative Audience Award at the Tribeca Film Festival.

"It's been crazy," Quaid recently told The Associated Press, which named him among its Breakthrough Entertainers of 2019. "It's just been a very wild year. I find myself thinking that I'm very lucky."

To prepare for "Plus One," Quaid binge-watched rom-coms, including "When Harry Met Sally" for the first time.

"When your mom has one of the most iconic orgasm scenes of all time, you tend

to not watch that," Quaid said, adding that he regretted missing out on it so long. "When I finished the movie, I was like, completely crying and emotional because I think she's so good in the movie. And I was just so upset that I hadn't seen it because of this one dumb thing."

As for "The Boys," Quaid calls the show a dream come true.

"And the fact that it's being viewed by people, I don't know. That's a miracle," he said.

Despite his success, Quaid said his life hasn't changed that much, except that more doors are opening for him professionally and people are starting to recognize him, although they often can't pinpoint why.

"They come up to me on the street and they go, 'Did we go to high school together?'" he said.

What's next for Quaid? For one, he'll do anything to be in a "Star Wars" movie.

"I'll be whatever in the movie -- I'll be a droid. I'll be like, a grain of sand on Tatooine. I don't care. That would be a huge, huge deal for me," he said. "I'm just really excited for the future and anything else that might come my way." □

Murakami holds rare public reading to mark debut anniversary

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A monkey that confesses he steals women's identity cards, causing them to temporarily forget who they are, starred Tuesday as author Haruki Murakami marked 40 years since his debut as a novelist with his first public reading in Japan in nearly a quarter century.

Now 70 and one of the world's most popular and acclaimed novelists, Murakami debuted with "Hear the Wind Sing" in 1979, four years after he began writing while running a jazz bar in Tokyo. His 1987 romantic novel "Norwegian Wood" was his first best seller, establishing him as a young literary star. His latest novel, "Killing Commendatore," hit



In this photo provided by Shinchosa, author Haruki Murakami, right, speaks on stage next to author Mieko Kawakami in Tokyo, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

Associated Press

U.S. bookstores last year. Media-shy Murakami's last public readings were in Kobe and Ashiya in western Japan, where he grew up, following a deadly

1995 earthquake there. On Tuesday, he was joined by award-winning young female novelist Mieko Kawakami, a longtime Murakami fan who was in the

audience at both events 24 years ago before she became a novelist.

After the two authors took turns reading passages from their works, Murakami said, "Actually, I have a brand new novel that I wrote a few weeks ago, and I haven't even published it." He said it is called "Confessions of a Shinagawa Monkey" and is a sequel to "A Shinagawa Monkey," a story of a woman named Mizuki who forgets her name because a monkey had stolen it, published as part of a 2002 compilation, "Five Strange Tales from Tokyo."

The new story takes place at a small Japanese hot spring hotel where a monkey appears as the protagonist takes a bath. The mon-

key, apparently speaking in Japanese, offers to wash his back, and explains he was raised by a professor and grew up listening to classical music such as Joseph Bruckner and Richard Strauss. The monkey faced discrimination in the conformist monkey community and ended up at the hot springs hotel where he is hired as a helper and given an attic to live in.

After the protagonist invites the monkey to his room for a chat over beer, the monkey says he is called Shinagawa Monkey and reveals he has a bad habit of stealing part of the names of women he falls in love with by taking their driver's licenses and other identification cards, causing them to forget their names. □

How do you save endangered gorillas? With lots of human help

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**

Associated Press

KINIGI, Rwanda (AP) —

Deep in the rainforest of Volcanoes National Park, a 23-year-old female gorilla named Kurudi feeds on a stand of wild celery. She bends the green stalks and, with long careful fingers, peels off the exterior skin to expose the succulent inside.

Biologist Jean Paul Hirwa notes her meal on his tablet computer as he peers out from behind a nearby stand of stinging nettles.

The large adult male sitting next to her, known as a silverback, looks at him quizzically. Hirwa makes a low hum — "ahh-mmm" — imitating the gorillas' usual sound of reassurance.

"I'm here," Hirwa is trying to say. "It's OK. No reason to worry."

Hirwa and the two great apes are all part of the world's longest-running gorilla study — a project begun in 1967 by famed American primatologist Dian Fossey.

Yet Fossey herself, who died in 1985, would likely be surprised any mountain gorillas are still left to study. Alarmed by rising rates of poaching and deforestation in central Africa, she predicted the species could go extinct by 2000.

Instead, a concerted and sustained conservation campaign has averted the worst and given a second chance to these great apes, which share about 98% of human DNA. Last fall, the Switzerland-based International Union for Conservation of Nature changed the status of mountain gorillas from "critically endangered" to "endangered," an improved if still-fragile designation.

It wouldn't have happened without an intervention some biologists call "extreme conservation," which has entailed monitoring every single gorilla in the rainforest, periodically giving them veterinary care and funding forest protection by sending money into communities that might otherwise resent not being able to convert the woods



In this Sept. 2, 2019 photo, a silverback mountain gorilla named Segasira walks in the Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda.

Associated Press

into cropland.

Instead of disappearing, the number of mountain gorillas — a subspecies of eastern gorillas — has risen from 680 a decade ago to just over 1,000 today. Their population is split between two regions, including mist-covered defunct volcanoes within Congo, Uganda and Rwanda — one of Africa's smallest and most densely populated countries.

"The population of mountain gorillas is still vulnerable," says George Schaller, a renowned biologist and gorilla expert. "But their numbers are now growing, and that's remarkable."

Once depicted in legends and films like "King Kong" as fearsome beasts, gorillas are actually languid primates that eat only plants

and insects, and live in fairly stable, extended family groups. Their strength and chest-thumping displays are generally reserved for contests between male rivals.

Every week, scientists like Hirwa, who works for the nonprofit conservation group the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, gather data as part of long-term behavioral research.

If they see any health problems in the gorillas, they inform the staff at Gorillas Doctors, a nongovernmental group whose veterinarians work in the forest. The vets monitor wounds and signs of respiratory infections, but intervene only sparingly. "Our hospital is the forest," says Jean Bosco Noheli, a veterinarian at Gorilla Doctors. When his

team goes into the field to address a gorilla emergency, they must carry everything they might need in equipment bags weighing up to 100 pounds — including portable X-ray machines. Schaller conducted the first detailed studies of mountain gorillas in the 1950s and early '60s. He also was the first to discover that wild gorillas could, over time, become comfortable with periodic human presence, a boon to researchers and, later, tourists. Today, highly regulated tour groups hike in the Rwandan rainforest to watch gorillas.

Ticket revenue pays for operating costs and outstrips what might have been made from converting the rainforest to potato farms and cattle pastures. About

40% of the forest already was cleared for agriculture in the early 1970s.

"With tourism, the tension is always not to overexploit," says Dirck Byler, great ape conservation director at the nonprofit Global Wildlife Conservation, which is not involved in the Rwanda gorilla project. "But in Rwanda, so far they're careful, and it's working."

The idea of using tourism to help fund conservation was contentious when conservationists Bill Weber and Amy Vedder first proposed it while living in Rwanda during the 1970s and '80s. Fossey herself was skeptical, but the pair persisted.

"The wonder of the gorillas' lives, their curiosity, their social interactions — we felt that's something that could be accessible to others, through careful tourism," Vedder says.

Figuring out the balance of how many people could visit the forest, and for how long, was a delicate process of trial and error, Weber says.

In 2005, the Rwandan government adopted a model to steer 5% of tourism revenue from Volcanoes National Park to build infrastructure in surrounding villages, including schools and health clinics. Two years ago, the share was raised to 10%.

To date, about \$2 million has gone into funding village projects, chief park warden Prosper Uwingeli says.

"We don't want to protect the park with guns. We want to protect and conserve this park with people who understand why, and who take responsibility," he says. The money from tourism helps, but the region is still poor.

Jean Claude Masengesho lives with his parents and helps them farm potatoes. About once a week, the 21-year-old earns a little extra money helping tourists carry their bags up the mountain, totaling about \$45 a month. He would someday like to become a tour guide, which could earn him about \$320 monthly. □



In this Sept. 7, 2019 photo, children watch a drone flying near the Volcanoes National Park in Kinigi, Rwanda.

Associated Press